RELIGIOUS LIFE IN ESSEX, CIRCA 1500 TO 1570

BY

IAN JAMES HART

SUBMITTED FOR A DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF WARWICK

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

SEPTEMBER 1992

CONTENTS

TABLES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank various people for the help I have received in preparing this thesis. First, Professor Scarisbrick has provided encouragement, constructive criticism and guidance of the highest order, and this work owes a great deal to his supervision during the last three years. Darryl Ogier, too, provided much food for thought with his comments and suggestions about the various drafts he kindly read for me. I would also like to thank the staff of the Essex Record Office in Chelmsford and Colchester for their help, together with the staff at the Public Record Office and the British Library. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for giving me the opportunity to pursue my education this far, and my wife, Nicky, for her love and support throughout.

SUMMARY

This thesis investigates popular religion in Essex during the English Reformation, and it assesses whether revisionist arguments that the Reformation was generally unwanted and was slow to take root apply there.

Various sources, such as wills, churchwardens' accounts and court records, have been examined. These reveal that popular piety was strong on the eve of the Reformation, and that Lollardy influenced only a minority. Most people acquiesced to the changes in religious practice and church decor demanded by the Henrician and Edwardian governments, but this was due mainly to obedience and coercion, not conversion to the new teachings. By Edward's death there was a minority of convinced Protestants in Essex, mainly in the North of the county and along the Thames. For the majority, however, the result of the changes was uncertainty and confusion in religious matters. Victims of this unease included religious drama and the Church's sponsorship of popular festivals; both had been widespread throughout the early sixteenth century, but were severely curtailed by the mid-1540s.

Mary attempted to restore Catholicism, and traditional piety did revive slightly during her reign, whilst traditional decor reappeared in Essex churches under the authorities' supervision; her reign also occasioned the death or exile of dozens of Essex Protestants. However, relatively few were committed to either set of doctrines, and confusion remained in matters pertaining to religion. During the early Elizabethan period traditional piety and decor mostly disappeared, but while the majority continued to exhibit Christian beliefs and principles, few were doctrinally Protestants. In addition, the environment which had allowed communities to put on plays in earlier decades continued to disappear, and an Elizabethan revival of communal religious drama failed. Thus by 1570 the old order was mostly destroyed, but the Protestant alternative still needed to be disseminated amongst the masses.

NOTE

All quotations from primary sources use the original spelling and punctuation, with abbreviations expanded and underlined. Dates from original documents are old style, but the beginning of the year is taken as 1 January not 25 March.

INTRODUCTION

In 1965 James E. Oxley's The Reformation in Essex to the Death of Mary was published. In it the advance of Protestantism is portrayed as both popular and inevitable and, if the matrices suggested by Christopher Haigh are applied to Oxley's work, his thesis is that the Reformation in this county was both swift and from below. Oxley's argument is based on two assumptions: first, that the pre-Reformation Church did not command the respect and commitment of the people; secondly, that Protestantism had a wide appeal.[1]

Whilst Oxley asserts that 'at the beginning of the sixteenth century...many people were passionately devoted to religion', and he accepts that the parish church provided not only the religious but also the social centre of parish life, he claims that the clergy had 'an almost total disregard of spiritual values'.[2] The continued failings of the clergy of Essex is one theme of Oxley's work. At the outset religious houses are condemned as having 'long since ceased to play any effective part in either religious or social life', whilst the majority of parish clergy are described as 'pluralists and time-servers of the worst sort'. Oxley concludes that 'at the end of Mary's reign the Church in Essex was in a bad

state. The clergy were time-servers, unprincipled, and for the most part uneducated'.[3]

Parallel to the assertion that the clergy were moribund is the theme of popular Protestantism in Essex. This, Oxley argues, dated back to Lollard antecedents, a heritage which meant that 'Essex was a strongly Protestant county. Before Henry had thought of the breach with Rome, Protestantism was strong in Essex, for there Lollardy was rife'. Lollardy meant that Essex was 'prepared for a breach with Rome before such a thought entered Henry's head'.[4]

However, it is not only in heretical groups that Oxley sees the seeds of Protestantism. For example, the establishment of chantries in Essex is regarded as 'at once a symptom of the low esteem into which monasteries had fallen, and of the growing individualism in religion which finally expressed itself in Protestantism'. A will from 1540 is said by Oxley to illustrate 'the flowing tide against Romanism' which he argues was prevalent by then, and he opines that by the 1550s Protestantism was so strong in Essex that active opposition to the policies of the Catholic Mary became apparent early in her reign.[5] Throughout Mary's reign 'Protestantism was still a force to be reckoned with', although it was divided into conservatives and radicals. Oxley concludes that the

death of Mary marked the end of the primary phase of the English Reformation.[6]

In addition, he argues that Protestantism grew in Essex in spite of the government's actions, not because of them. Henry was horrified by the growth of Protestantism, and Parliament passed the conservative Act of Six Articles in 1539 which heralded the renewed persecution of heretics.[7] Under Edward 'the parishes of Essex lost their property, their poor relief and their schools, and received nothing in return except the church service in English'. Furthermore, parish churches were looted, both officially by the crown and illegally by local gentry, while they were further impoverished by the debasement of the coinage. Indeed, Oxley asserts that the 'so-called Reformation of Edward's reign was probably much more disastrous than the changes of Henry's reign'.[8] Under Mary persecution became overt; some dissidents were forced into exile, while others were brought to the stake. After the events of Edward's reign, 'it says much for the strength of Protestant feeling in Essex that when Mary came to the throne and restored Romanism, many Essex people resisted it to the death and proclaimed their devotion to the religious services introduced in Edward's time'.[9]

Oxley provides a fairly comprehensive summary of the material from Essex, but his prime concern is with tracing the development of Protestantism. Thus on the whole he fails to examine what effects the changes of the sixteenth century had on the religious beliefs and practices of most people. He acknowledges that alterations to parish life did occur, but these he confines to the disappearance of guilds (bodies whose importance he underestimates), the end of religious plays, and the administration of social services, such as roads and poor relief, by the parish rather than by 'the hit-and-miss of private charity'. Oxley also shows little sensitivity to the pressures and confusion which the religious changes generated. Martyrdoms and a few selected wills are used to show the deep attachment of some to Protestantism. However, the majority, who dutifully obeyed royal commands and coercion in religious matters, are dismissed as caring 'little for principles at all'.[10]

The assumptions which underpin Oxley's thesis have been questioned by recent 'revisionist' scholarship, and Christopher Haigh has identified four stages of the revisionists' strategy. First, they have sought to rehabilitate the pre-Reformation Church, and thus deny that there were underlying causes which made the Reformation both necessary and inevitable. Secondly, they argue that Protestantism was not an irresistible force,

but that its dissemination was a long drawn-out and hard-fought process. Next, revisionists portray Catholicism as continuing to be popular into the Elizabethan era and beyond. Finally, they seek the causes of the Reformation in political manoeuvering and faction-fighting at court.[11] Historians such as J.J. Scarisbrick, Susan Brigden, Christopher Haigh and Robert Whiting, amongst others, have found that the pre-Reformation Church was indeed actively supported by many of the laity, while in those areas where Protestantism took root early on, such as in the South-East, few were doctrinally Protestants by the 1560s and Catholic survivalism did occur.[12]

It is in the light of revisionist arguments that this study has been undertaken. In the following chapters I will seek to discover how the laity in Essex regarded the pre-Reformation Church and its personnel, and whether there was widespread dissatisfaction with orthodox Catholicism. I will then examine what changes occurred in parish life between the break with Rome and the excommunication of Elizabeth I, and how the laity reacted to these. As this study is primarily concerned with popular religion amongst the laity, little will be said about the religious houses of sixteenth-century Essex or their dissolution, or about the county's ecclesiastical structures and changes to them. This dissertation is essentially a study of the parish life of Essex during the

but that its dissemination was a long drawn-out and hard-fought process. Next, revisionists portray Catholicism as continuing to be popular into the Elizabethan era and beyond. Finally, they seek the causes of the Reformation in political manoeuvering and faction-fighting at court.[11] Historians such as J.J. Scarisbrick, Susan Brigden, Christopher Haigh and Robert Whiting, amongst others, have found that the pre-Reformation Church was indeed actively supported by many of the laity, while in those areas where Protestantism took root early on, such as in the South-East, few were doctrinally Protestants by the 1560s and Catholic survivalism did occur.[12]

It is in the light of revisionist arguments that this study has been undertaken. In the following chapters I will seek to discover how the laity in Essex regarded the pre-Reformation Church and its personnel, and whether there was widespread dissatisfaction with orthodox Catholicism. I will then examine what changes occurred in parish life between the break with Rome and the excommunication of Elizabeth I, and how the laity reacted to these. As this study is primarily concerned with popular religion amongst the laity, little will be said about the religious houses of sixteenth-century Essex or their dissolution, or about the county's ecclesiastical structures and changes to them. This dissertation is essentially a study of the parish life of Essex during the

period 1500 to 1570. Wills, churchwardens' accounts and, where possible, church court records are the main sources which have been used, together with other documents that cast light on parish life in Essex at this time. Thus I hope to provide a broader picture of how the laity were affected by the English Reformation, and how they responded to this process, than was produced by Oxley.

Writing at the end of the sixteenth century, John Norden said of Essex:

> This shire is moste fatt, frutefull, and full of profitable thinges exceding (as farr as I can finde) anie other shire, for the generall comodaties, and the plentie...this shire seemeth to me to deserue the title of the englishe Goshen, the fattest of the Lande: comparable to Palestina, that flowed with milke and hunnye.[13]

Lying to the North-East of London, Essex was primarily an agrarian county.[14] Wills are one source which reflect the dominance of agriculture in the Essex economy. Nearly two thousand wills written between 1500 and 1570 have been examined, and of these 512 state the testator's occupation. This information has been analysed, and compared with the findings of William Hunt for the post-

TABLE 1 Occupations of Testators, c.1500-1570

Occupation	Percentage of wills of testators of known status 1500-1570	Percentage of wills of testators of known status 1570-1619*
Gentry	3	4
Clergy	5	Data Not Provided
Yeomen	26	32
Husbandmen	31	33
Other agricultural workers	4	4
Clothiers	5	1
Weavers	1	3
Other artisans	10	16
Food/leather trade	5	4
Mariners/fishermen	6	Data Not Provided
Others	3	3

*SOURCE: W. Hunt, The Puritan Moment (Harvard, 1983), p.4.

1570 period, in Table 1.

As can be seen, agriculture provided by far the greatest source of employment for testators throughout the sixteenth century. However, a table such as this does not provide an accurate picture of the occupational map of the county. As William Hunt points out, most wills were written by people from society's higher echelons, and thus a census such as this is biassed against the poor.[15] For example, it has been estimated that in the later sixteenth century at least fifteen percent of the male population of Essex were weavers or other textile workers, yet because of their poverty they are under-represented amongst extant wills.[16] In spite of this, however, the impression given

by the analysis of testators is correct, and the Essex economy was primarily agricultural.

Norden described four differing areas of agricultural activity within this county. In the South-East were the hundreds of Rochford and Dangie, which produced milk, butter and cheese. Cheese was also produced in the North-East of Essex in the hundred of Tendring, which had 'manie wickes or dayries', along with 'manie barren groundes'. The northern hundreds of Laxden, Hinckford, Dunmow and Freshwell were said to abound with hops, together with 'corne in reasonable measure'. Corn was also forthcoming in the hundreds of Uttlesford and Clavering, in the North-West of the county, and in Chelmsford hundred, which is situated in the middle of Essex; these hundreds were 'enterlaced with woodes and rugged groundes', too, and so accommodated some animal husbandry. In addition, Walden, in Uttlesford hundred, was noted for the cultivation of saffron, a product still remembered in that town's modern name. Finally, the hundreds of Waltham, Ongar and Becontree, and the liberty of Havering, which together comprise the South-West corner of Essex, were mostly wooded.[17]

The South-Eastern hundreds of Barstable, Rochford and Dangie were also noted for the cultivation of oats, while sheep were to be found on 'the moste barren and heathye

grounds'.[18] Despite these broad distinctions between areas, however, there was enough local variety for William Hunt to conclude: 'Virtually all Essex farming was in some sense mixed husbandry, since the vast majority of farmers combined, though in varying proportions, the growing of crops with the keeping of livestock'.[19]

Although primarily an agricultural county, Essex did support some industry. The towns of Colchester, Braintree, Coggeshall, Bocking, Halstead and Dedham, which lie in the North of the county, were centres of cloth production. Indeed, it has been claimed that in these towns the majority of the population participated in the industry full-time, while possibly as many as half the adult population of Essex, a large proportion of them women, supplemented the family income by spinning.[20]

The sea also provided an alternative source of employment. As Norden wrote, 'it yeldeth store of excellent good fishe, and giueth passage for all kind of trafique, to the greate benifite of the country'. Both Maldon and Colchester were ports, but the most important one was Harwich, which was 'a towne fitlie scytuate for seafaring men'. Fishing, too, was important to several areas. Norden asserted that 'Some part of the sea shore of Essex yeeldeth the best oysters in England', while Barking, which lies on the Thames, was principally a

fishing town, and many wills from there state that the testator was a fisherman.[21]

Ecclesiastically, Essex was part of the diocese of London and contained sixteen deaneries, together with various peculiar jurisdictions. The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535 listed 378 benefices in Essex; 132 of these were appropriated, mainly by religious houses. After the dissolution of the monasteries the advowsons of many benefices passed into lay hands, as did the rectories of appropriated livings. The seven southern deaneries of Barking, Barstable, Chafford, Chelmsford, Dengie, Ongar and Rochford comprised the archdeaconry of Essex, while the four North-Eastern deaneries of Colchester, Lexden, Tendring and Witham, together with the North-Western deaneries of Newport and Sampford, formed the archdeaconry of Colchester. The three deaneries of Dunmow, Harlow and Hedingham, which lie diagonally from the Hertfordshire border in the West to the Suffolk border in the North, were part of the archdeaconry of Middlesex.

In 1500 there were thirty-one religious houses in Essex, two of which were abandoned before the dissolution of the monasteries. Cardinal Wolsey dissolved six Essex priories in 1525 to help endow his proposed colleges. The remaining twenty-three religious houses, including four friaries, disappeared between 1536 and 1540. The abbey of

Waltham Holy Cross, which was dissolved on 23 March 1540, was the last religious house in England to be dissolved.[22] However, this study is concerned with popular religion in Essex, not with its monasteries. Thus it is to religious life in the pre-Reformation parishes of this county that we now turn.

CHAPTER ONE

THE CHURCH IN ESSEX ON THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION

1] THE PARISH CHURCH AND THE COMMUNITY

The churchwardens of Great Dunmow began their accounts for the year 1526/7 with a list of those who had contributed to the making of that church's steeple. Beginning with 5s. received from a former vicar of the parish, followed by 6s. 8d. from the current incumbent, the list contains 166 names: ten have no sum next to them, while for the rest the donations vary between £3 6s. 8d. and 1d.. The total gathered was £11 19s. 1d.. A couple of years later there appeared a list of 153 names, this time apparently donating towards the construction of the church fence. Of these, twenty-six record no sum next to a name, and contributions vary between 18s. 10d. and a penny; this collection made £7 0s. 5d..[1]

While Great Dunmow is the only Essex parish that provides totals of both the numbers of donors and the amounts received for major works of construction, it is clear that this parish was not unique in undertaking programmes of church building in the years immediately before the beginning of the English Reformation. Two wills from 1525 contained bequests for the construction of

St John's aisle in that same church.[2] Eleven years earlier the church of Burnham had been left five marks towards the making of the South aisle there. Similarly, both the churches of Lambourne in 1520 and Braintree in 1526 were remembered in parishioners wills, this time the roof being the work specified.[3] A seventeenth-century copy of some entries from the Braintree churchwardens' accounts mention a porch being built in 1522 and a new aisle in 1526.[4]

From 1516 work was done on the roodloft of Heybridge church and various images of saints, including one of St George, were erected.[5] Funding was also forthcoming in wills for work on the roodlofts of North Ockendon in 1529 and Great Totham in 1530.[6] Earlier, in 1517, Elizabeth Burgyn had left her parish church of Birchanger a debt owed to her to help pay for the 'sealyng over of the rode lofte', 20s. towards the 'gildyng of the Rode', and 'flexen yarne' to make both a cloth to hang before the roodloft and a surplice.[7]

Bequests for the decoration of tabernacles were made in Stanford le Hope in 1520, Clavering in 1523 and Harwich in 1530.[8] Indeed, the Clavering donor, John Stewarde, left 40s. for the painting of St John's tabernacle, unless someone else was to pay for the whole cost of this, in which case the money was to go towards the painting of Our

Lady's tabernacle in the chancel. In 1507 William Osborne, also of Clavering, was most specific with his wishes:

> Also y will that the walle of the North yle of the forsaid church be whitlymed to begyn at Saynt Kateryns awter & contynew unto the North dore & in that space to be paynted oon image of our lode & onn ymage of Saynt Cristofer.[9]

Further examples of bequests for church plate, vestments or specific repairs can be found, together with the more popular donation towards church maintenance in general, in many wills from the period 1500 to 1530. In total, over forty percent of 222 wills looked at which date from that period contain a bequest to the testator's parish church. Furthermore, around twenty percent of wills also left something towards the maintenance of lights or altars within the churches of Essex. However, it was not meraly the Church in the immediate locality which was the recipient of bequests. Just under twenty percent of testators made donations to the church of another parish, while three out of ten wills remembered the diocesan church of St Paul's in London too.[10]

Thus many Essex churches were the subjects of construction on the eve of the Reformation, funded by

members of the community. Such investment suggests a general contentment with the way things were, and a confidence that the accustomed situation was set to continue.[11] The reasons for such generosity were varied. On the one hand, there was a sense of communal pride and personal enthusiasm.[12] A recent historian has regarded the rebuilding of St Margaret's, Westminster, between 1485 and 1525 as representing 'the collective desire to erect a major public building in the town'.[13]

The church was also an institution which could offer aid at times of danger or concern. A chapel dedicated to St Mary in Rayne church was much frequented by child-bearing women after the statue of the Virgin there was reported to have given a portent of the safe delivery by a noble woman, who was having a difficult labour, back in the reign of Edward III.[14] In 1450/1 the churchwardens of Saffron Walden paid men a penny for ringing during a violent storm. This was an attempt to protect the parish, for consecrated church bells were regarded as being effective in dispelling the demons who were thought to be responsible for storms.[15] But the concern of a person for the fate of his or her soul was perhaps of paramount importance. The church was both an important part of the community, and the only means by which a Christian could hope to gain salvation. These two themes were interlinked.

The role of the church in the community life of the parish is clearly attested by the various church-based communal events that are recorded in extant churchwardens' accounts. Those of the church of Saffron Walden date from 1439 to 1490. They reveal that the church organised regular Whitsun church ales and processions both at Rogationtide and on Corpus Christi day.[16]

On the Rogation days the parish bounds were trod, and the accounts reveal payments for the carrying of banners on each of the Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of Rogation week, that is, the three days before Ascension Day, together with the bearing of a cross. Priests would have taken part in this procession wearing vestments, adding to the sense of a religious ritual. While certain 'magical' elements have been associated with this rite, not even Keith Thomas claims that these were its primary function. He writes: 'Basically, they were the corporate manifestation of the village community, an occasion for eating and drinking, and the reconciliation of disputes'.[17]

Both church ales and Corpus Christi celebrations had similar unifying effects. It is clear from the accounts of Saffron Walden that the feast of Corpus Christi was celebrated there with a procession; generally speaking, this feast heralded what was the most important

processional event in the late Medieval town.[18] Payments were made for the bearing of banners on that day, and also for ringing. Other payments were for the 'hers' or shrine of Corpus Christi, in which the host was carried during the procession. This event was a communal expression by the parish of its Christian piety, and a show of unity by that community. Miri Rubin writes: 'The very itinerary followed by urban processions was meant to invoke in participants and spectators a sense of identity...sewing together the town's disparate parts with a processional thread'.[19]

The church ale was both a charitable fund-raising event and an opportunity to create or enhance the sense of community within the parish. Beer was brewed and food provided, which required co-operation amongst the parishioners. Furthermore, the success of such an event relied upon parishioners spending money freely on the day itself. Church ales helped to place the church not only at the spiritual centre of the community, but at its social centre too.[20]

The most comprehensive churchwardens' accounts from the 1520s are those of Great Dunmow and Great Hallingbury. These show that many communal activities, similar to those seen in Saffron Walden in the previous century, were still being celebrated with vigour. They also show that these

churches' finances relied heavily on regular contributions from the parishioners which they served.

In Great Hallingbury there were six regular sources of income. These were: money received at a church ale on Passion Sunday; wax silver, which was an annual collection to maintain the lights in the church; Peter's Pence, which was a contribution to the annual national payment to Rome; profits from the 'beastwardens' accounts, who administered the church's live-stock; money from the collectors of the Trinity guild; and an annual rent of 12d. for a cow left by one John Thurgood to fund a taper.[21]

Thus the continued functioning of this church relied on donations from the local community. For example, the 1538 entry concerning the church ale reads: 'Item received on Passhyon Sonday on the halle parish & other drynkers to ye manteynyng of the sepulcre lyght'.[22] Thus an element of the ritual which surrounded Easter, the most important of the Christian festivals, relied on money received at a regular event which was voluntary. While the income from this source varied from year to year, it continued to be popular beyond the break with Rome. It is unclear whether the collections for the church's wax and Peter's Pence were based on voluntary donations or on some fixed levy, but it remains a fact that in this parish it was the people who funded the church.

The funds collected by the beastwardens show that the church was part of the community's hierarchical structure, as it hired out property. Some of the community owed a monetary debt to the church and not just a spiritual one. Yet the role of the beastwardens was not restricted to collecting rents for the church. Each year the churchwardens gave the beastwardens 4s. which was used 'to se ye bhess lyght kept'. Thus the church contained a light for the wellbeing of farm animals, although it is unclear whether this protection was restricted to church stock or extended to the animals of all parishioners.[23]

The idea of the church as a property-owner and the church as the means to salvation were not contradictory. Money from the beastwardens obviously helped the church perform its spiritual duties. This was even more clearly exemplified by the 12d. rent for Thurgood's cow. Tapers such as that which this money funded were intended to remind both saints in Heaven and passers-by on Earth of the soul of the departed, and so prompt prayers for its repose.[24] Property in this world was thus set aside to fund a religious institution in this world to aid the soul of someone in the next.

In Great Dunmow money came into the coffers of the church from a variety of sources. May Day and Corpus Christi events regularly featured in the churchwardens'

accounts, as did Lords of Misrule and Plough Monday celebrations. Whether Corpus Christi in this town was celebrated solely with a procession, as seems to have been the case in Saffron Walden, or by means of a play as well, which was the case in some other English towns, will be considered in Chapter Six, along with a fuller examination of all Dunmow's festivities. Here we need note only that this event was an important element in the year of this parish and, along with many of the events mentioned above, was communal.[25]

Other forms of communal support for the church occurred in other parishes. Plays were performed in both Haybridge and Braintree in the years around the break with Rome, and that in Braintree in 1534 is stated as having contributed to the construction of 'the upper part of the church & south isle'.[26] In 1518/19 Haybridge church received 18s. 3d. 'for the campyng sporte', which was probably a game of football played in the open country. In 1522 1s. 3d. was received from the 'gadryng of the white plowe', while in 1529/30 the bachelors and maidens of the parish donated wax for the sepulchre.[27]

Pre-Reformation churches were an integral part of their parishes' community life and they continued to attract support and investment, both from individuals and the community as a whole, up to the beginning of the

Reformation. This is not surprising. The Church was the sole channel by which a Christian could hope for salvation. In Essex, as elsewhere, a fall in traditional piety and religious practice came after the break with Rome, rather than pre-empting it.

2] PRE-REFORMATION WILLS AND INTERCESSORY INSTITUTIONS

Wills are one source from which religious trends can be discerned. In all probability these documents do reveal the beliefs and concerns of the testator rather than those of the writer of the will, who was often a cleric. Many wills contain much detail with, for example, alternative courses of action being provided if a beneficiary of a bequest died. This indicates both an intimate knowledge of the testator's affairs, and a strong desire for the 'right thing' to be done.[28]

The piety vaunted in a will might not reflect an equally pious life. However, wills do show the concerns of the time and the ways by which these could be ameliorated. As Susan Brigden says, when death approached there were compelling reasons to tell the truth.[29] A will might not be proof of a pious life, but it does show the religious outlook of the testator. Even if certain

elements of a will are taken as being mere formulae, these still reflect the general religious climate of the time.

Wills reveal only the intentions of a testator rather than what was actually performed by the executors. For example, in 1518 John Peppis of Braintree left 20s. for a new clock for the church; his son's will, made five years later, said that that money had not yet been paid and ordered that this should be done immediately.[30] Also, wills do not reveal all the pious provisions that a person may have made, for the living gave to the Church too.[31] However, they remain a useful source from which the religious mores of the time can be discerned.

Between 1500 and 1530 over ninety-seven percent of the wills looked at contain a pious bequest to either a religious or charitable recipient. All such bequests were pious, for they all were regarded as helping the salvation of the testator's soul. As Dr. Thomson said: 'it is often impossible to separate pious gifts from charitable ones, because no such differentiation existed in the mind of the donor'.[32] For example, a will from Colchester written in 1540 left 13s. 4d. for 'massis dyrgis & other dedys of charyte' on the day of the testator's burial.[33]

Statistics alone are an inadequate method to examine the contents of wills, but a few figures show that between

1500 and 1530 by far the majority of testators adhered to traditional teachings.[34] During that period nearly ninety percent of wills began by bequeathing the testator's soul to God, St Mary and all the saints. However, even those which used some other preamble do not necessarily indicate a lack of certainty in the teachings of the Catholic Church, for nearly all went on to make bequests firmly entrenched in traditional beliefs.

The fate of the body was important, too. Most wills asked for it to be placed in the parish churchyard, and some specified where it was to be buried, usually near to dead family or spouses. Around ten percent sought burial in the church itself, which was regarded as being socially prestigious.[35] Some ten percent of testators made special provisions for their burial, in the form of either a dole to the poor, or services for their soul. Yet such acts of charity were intended to benefit the soul as well, both as it was a good work and because it gained the prayers of the grateful poor on behalf of the donor. Thus when Adam Croypton of Chigwell made his will in 1528 he stated that the following payments should be made: 15d. to 'Mayster Weker or hys deputy' for lights, dirges and burial; 3d. to a priest; 6d. to the clerk; 4d. to two boys or men to help sing the dirges; 4d. to the churchwardens for their labours; 7d. to the poor; 8d. to Our Lady's light; and 3s. for bread, ale and cheese.[36]

Over eighty percent of wills made a bequest to the high altar of the parish church, and some testators, such as Richard Raylond in 1512, stated that this was not only for unpaid tithes but also 'to be prayede for'.[37] An eighth of testators made arrangements for either a chantry to be established or for a priest to be paid a stipend to pray for a set period of time, but none of these arrangements were to be perpetual. Nearly thirty percent of testators provided for a trental of Masses and one-in-four wished to establish an obit. Agnes Luton of Clavering, in her will dated 1510, asked for an acre of land to be sold to fund certain pilgrimages for her soul.[38] All told, over seventy percent of wills expressed the desire for some form of intercession on behalf of the testator's soul. Furthermore, those who did not state such beliefs may have taken it for granted that this was to be provided.[39]

John Bossy has asserted that: 'The devotion, theology, liturgy, architecture, finances, social structure and institutions of late medieval Christianity are inconceivable without the assumption that the friends and relations of the souls in Purgatory had an absolute obligation to procure their release, above all by having masses said for them'.[40] The development of the doctrine of Purgatory enabled the repentant and obedient sinner to hope for salvation, where once it had been assumed that few outside of the cloister would be saved.[41] People were

encouraged by the Church to work off their poena, which was the punishment due for sin. Furthermore, they were shown how this could be done.

A store of merit could be accrued by good works performed during one's life, while the prayers of others could help the souls of the departed. Those who prayed were in turn performing a good work. Thus intercession was motivated by Christian altruism and charity, the desire to help oneself, and the wish on the part of the living to maintain a system which one day would offer them aid when they were no longer able to provide it for themselves. With the doctrine of Purgatory the Church had diagnosed man's ailment, the wish for a degree of certainty when it came to attaining salvation, and offered a cure.[42]

Chantries were one means by which a person could seek prayers, although the cost involved meant that their foundation was restricted to the well-to-do. A chantry was endowed with lands or rents and the chantry priest was expected to offer mass daily for the souls of the departed, above all for that of the founder. Such a foundation could be either perpetual or for a set period. In 1535 the Valor Ecclesiasticus recorded sixty-five chantries in Essex.

Because of the need to obtain a mortmain licence, the foundation of a perpetual chantry was usually undertaken while the founder was still alive. That explains why none of the chantries mentioned in wills were permanent. Two such grants, issued to couples in Great Chesterford in 1514, and Dedham in 1524, were made for the establishment of perpetual chantries.[43] It is unclear, however, whether these were ever founded; grants such as these indicate an intent to found a chantry, rather than an actual foundation.[44] Neither the Valor Ecclesiasticus nor the two sets of Chantry Certificates from the 1540s mentioned such an institution in Dedham. A priest is mentioned as serving in Great Chesterford both in the 1535 survey and in the 1547 Chantry Certificates, but it is not certain that he was performing the role sanctioned in 1514, nor indeed that these two Chantries are the same.[45] The grant allowed land up to the value of ten marks a year to be acquired to fund this priest; the gross annual value of the chantry found in 1535 was £6 9s. 10d., while that discovered in 1548 was worth £9 9s. 7d..

Obits were cheaper to found and so were more common. For example, in West Mersea in about 1530 there were ten rents from cows and other stock which went to maintain obits and lamps in that parish.[46] An obit may not only have reflected the desire on the part of the testator to provide aid for his or her soul, but also showed concern

for the esteem of this world, with its celebration set to continue, on the whole, for ever. Often an obit took place on two consecutive days, one of these being the anniversary of the death of the founder.[47]

On occasion a testator's will went further than merely stating that an obit was to be provided and specified what that event was to entail. The will of Richard Hanchat, dated 1522, founded an obit for both Hanchat and his wife which was to cost 3s. 4d. a year, funded by a pightel. The curate was to be paid 10d. for a dirge and mass and to remember them on the beadrole; the clark was to receive 1d. and the sexton 2d.; 1d. was to be paid for candles; 4d. was to go to four poor men; 6d. was to be spent on bread, 8d. on ale and 4d. on cheese; and 4d. was to be given to the churchwardens.[48]

Twelve years earlier John Elmeden, a tailor from Birchanger, had left a bequest for the establishment of a perpetual obit funded by a croft. This was to yield 4d. to the parson and for masses; 4d. to be remembered on the beadrole; 2d. to the sexton for ringing; 6d. in bread and ale to the poor to pray for Elmeden and his friends; and 2d. to each of the churchwardens, after the death of his wife, to see that the obit was maintained.[49]

The desire for intercession on behalf of their souls shows that the doctrine of Purgatory was widely adhered to amongst testators. But such intercession was seldom confined to the soul of the person who established the intercessory institution. Spouses, parents and friends were often specified as to be prayed for too, as were 'all Christian souls'. In a slightly different vein, the will of John Steven of Alresford, written in 1527, sought to establish a yearly anniversary for himself on the Friday after Midlent Sunday, with dirge and mass, the tolling of bells, lights, food and drink, and a dole to the poor. However, his will also funded similar anniversaries at different times for each of his two brothers.[50] This may indicate a long established understanding between these brothers, but it also shows that matters of salvation were not merely of individual concern.

That children and distant ancestors were seldom specifically remembered adds credibility to John Bossy's assertion that intercession was on behalf of 'a group capable of giving mutual assistance, and that a foundation is partly a return for services rendered'.[51] The will of Robert Okey, written in 1515, left a gown to Peter Hardyng. When Hardyng wrote his own will that same year he included the clause: 'Item to Custance Rowland the gowne that Robard Okey gave me to pray for hym & me'.[52] It is also possible to see the doctrine of Purgatory

contributing to the creation of a series of circular flows of mutual reliance and assistance, such as the rich seeking the prayers of the poor in return for charity, or the laity funding clerics whom they relied on to be saved.[53]

Charity to the poor, as revealed by specific bequests in wills, was not as high in the thirty years or so just prior to the start of the Reformation as it was to be during later decades. However, two points should be made. First, it is possible that at this time testators did not see as great a need for charity as later generations did. More importantly, however, the true figure has certainly been obscured.

There was a sense in which the poor were regarded as being somehow blessed, and charity was seen as a sure way of building up treasure in Heaven.[54] Around six percent of pre-Reformation wills remembered the poor. While most of this charity was in the form of a dole by the will's executors, some wished to support institutions for poor relief. Two Colchester wills, for example, gave to the 'almys beddys' of St Anne's without Colchester, one in 1503 and the other in 1516.[55] However, a third of testators requested that the residue of their goods be used by their executors for the good of their souls, and it is possible that this was intended for charity.

Whether or not the executors acted accordingly is another matter.

Funerals were one occasion when the deceased may have wanted the poor to receive a dole, and it might have been taken for granted that some of the money left for this event would be spent thus, so no specific mention of it was made in the will. Then there were obits. As has been shown above, a quarter of the wills written between 1500 and 1530 which have been examined sought to establish such an event. Those which go on to itemise how the money was to be spent all left a portion to the poor. Furthermore, the Edwardian Chantry Certificates detected 264 obits in Essex, of which 213 were said to have provided alms, although it is claimed that this figure might have been exaggerated.[56] Thus charity was clearly more popular than at first seems, and this is because it was not distinguished from other forms of pious provision.

Secular priests were one group who were paid to provide prayers. Beneficed clergy were in the minority and centres such as London have been described as having a 'burgeoning proletariat of curates, chantry priests, morrow mass priests, fraternity and stipendiary priests'.[57] Provision for the souls of the departed had benefits for the parish in general, such as enhancing the quality and quantity of services and liturgy within the

church.[58] Some, such as the priest of the Jesus guild, Prittlewell, taught; others were specifically expected to help serve the cure, like the chantry priest at Coggeshall, which parish only had a vicar otherwise.[59] All added to the amount of divine service performed in the church. With so many testators making provision for a secular priest to be hired to say prayers, it would seem to follow that such priests were fairly widely available to be hired. Furthermore, that there were enough priests to satisfy spiritual aspirations suggests that there was widespread confidence in the efficacy of traditional religion.[60]

Many testators showed the same desire as Richard Rucke of St Nicholas's, Colchester, who in 1510 left ten marks for the souls of himself, his friends and all Christians to be prayed for, for a year, by a 'weldesposyd preest'.[61] Such a stipulation regarding the character of the serving priest was moving towards dangerous ground. It was heretical to consider an unworthy priest as being unable to channel divine grace, for the Church asserted his ordination gave him the power to administer the sacraments regardless of his personal attributes.[62] It is clear, however, that testators regarded the priest's role as essential. Objections were made to unworthy priests, not to the priesthood in general.

The regular clergy, too, might be remembered as death approached, although in Essex they were not one of the more popular subjects of bequests. Only about one in eight Essex wills mention them, whereas nationally one in five wills left money to friars and one in six remembered houses of monks or nuns.[63] In Essex, too, it was friars who mainly benefited, and most bequests required at least part of a trental of masses. Local houses were the ones most often remembered, and of the twenty-nine wills which made a bequest to religious houses, twelve left something to more than one.

Testators in the North of the county were most likely to seek intercession by either the Franciscan or, to a lesser extent, Crossed Friars of Colchester. Of the fifteen wills which mention one or both of these Colchester houses, four are by Colchester people and all but one of the remainder come from the neighbouring deaneries of Lexden or Tendering. A Broomfield testator sought prayers from the Dominicans of the adjacent Chelmsford in 1500, and again that house was remembered by John More, from the also nearby parish of West Hanningfield, in 1522.[64] Similarly, when the Cluniac priory at Prittlewell was left a 'laton bason' in 1501 it was by a man from the parish in which that house lay, while the Premonstratensian Canons of Beeleigh Abbey were

left £40 in 1527 by John Garyngton of nearby Haybridge for their prayers for four years.[65]

3] THE RELIGIOUS GUILDS OF ESSEX

One common source of aid, both to the living in the form of charity, but primarily to the dead in the form of intercession, were the religious guilds. These were found throughout the country and in recent years they have received much greater attention from the historian. Above all else, it has been shown that they were much more numerous than was once thought. The doctrine of Purgatory was their main raison d'etre, and it was only after that doctrine was disavowed in the 1540s that these bodies received their final death blow.[66]

Few of these bodies are immediately apparent in Essex. Richard II ordered full returns of guilds to be made to the Council in Chancery, and that was done during the winter of 1388-9. The extant returns for Essex reveal eight guilds in five parishes.[67] Those guilds which had property were recorded amongst the chantry certificates ordered first by Henry VIII, and then by his son, in the 1540s. These reveal twenty-two Essex guilds.[68] However, these were only the tip of the iceberg. My research has turned up over 130 guilds in around a hundred parishes,

towns or religious houses, and this list cannot be regarded as comprehensive.[69]

In addition, it has been suggested that some of those lights or altars mentioned in wills were maintained by guilds, and fifteen lights in Essex churches are referred to as guilds elsewhere.[70] For example, the will of John Wudland, dated July 1531, left 2d. to each of Our Lady, St John, St Anne and St Christopher lights in Dagenham church; the will of John Bysshope from 1536 bequeathed a like sum to the same four lights.[71] Thomas Trewluff's will from 1532 phrased a similar bequest slightly differently:

> I guffe to the iiij broderhad lyghtts yt ys to sey owre lyght (sic) Sent John lyght Sent anne lyght & Sent xpore lyght to evy on of yem iiijd.[72]

Not all lights had guilds attached to them, but some certainly did.

It has been said that the study of religious guilds is the best medium by which the social and spiritual obligations implicit in Catholic devotion can be revealed.[73] Guilds were dedicated to a saint or some other religious patron and were basically associations of lay people which undertook to provide members with a good

funeral and prayers for their souls. Living members were expected to attend a special mass for the guild's brothers and sisters, both living and dead, on the annual feast day of the guild. After that an annual general meeting was held at which the guild's temporal affairs were discussed. There then followed an annual feast.[74]

Membership was open to persons of either sex in their own right. The membership list for the guild of Holy Trinity in Great Hallingbury survives for the year 16 Henry VIII (1524-5). This reveals the identities of forty-one brothers and sisters; there were fifteen husband and wife couples, seven men and four women.[75] Sometimes a woman's role was more active still. The suggestion by the seventeenth-century Essex antiquarian, Rev. Morant, that the guild of Our Lady's Lights in Braintree was restricted to women only is probably a mistaken interpretation of the records, which mention an 'Alderwoman & wardens of the Ladys lights'. However, this no doubt indicates a woman guild officer in mixed guild, and as such she would not have been unique, if rather rare.[76]

The organisation and intentions of guilds in general are clearly indicated in the statutes of the guild of All Saints in Moreton.[77] The first eleven statutes are dated 1473. To these a further statute was added, dated 'mccccliij' but no doubt originating from 1504. While the

two prayers which head the document are in Latin, the remainder is in English. The second statute has been lost, but the rest seem to have been preserved in full.

The statutes form three groups. The first group comprises five statutes and deals with the organisation of the guild. The annual celebrations occurred on the first Sunday after All Saints day, with all members going to evensong on the Saturday and mass on the Sunday. Any guild member who was in the town at this time but who did not attend these services was fined a pound of wax for each absence. This wax would have been used for the candles which the guild provided for processions, funerals and the church, and it was common for guilds to fine their members in such a way.[78]

As was generally the case the patronal religious service was followed by the annual general meeting, at which the guild's officers were chosen. The alderman called upon two men by name, and these two 'masters of the gyld' chose two more men, with these four choosing a further two men. The masculine gender is the one used in the document itself. These six men, bound by an oath made previously to the guild, elected an alderman, two masters, a clerk and a dean. If any of the officers 'forsakys hys office' he was fined. After the officers were elected the two masters of the guild presented the accounts for the

previous yeare; these officers were bound 'in a syngyll oblygacione for to make a trew delyverance' of these accounts. The social side of this day is indicated by each officer being allocated an amount of beer, both for himself and for his guests.

Admission to the guild first required the applicants to swear to maintain the guild's statutes as far as they could. Next they needed to find 'ii suffycient plegges' to pay the guild 2s. 6d. and the clerk and the dean a penny each. These sums had to be paid by the next annual meeting at the latest.

The guild was a voluntary organisation, but it made various demands of its members, and they were bound to comply with these because of the oath which they had sworn upon entering the guild. The power of oaths and the risks incurred, both spiritual and for the community in general, when such obligations were broken, have been described by Susan Brigden.[79] The guild could function only if its statutes were complied with; fines were exacted if they were not. Officers were obliged to serve the guild to the best of their ability, and those who were elected were considered most able to fulfil the role assigned to them. Refusal to accept an office incurred a fine for the obligation to serve the guild and its members had been broken. It was in a similar light that those who refused

to perform their civic duties were guilty of perjury and were liable to be fined.[80]

The guild was exclusive to some extent. The demand of an entry fine must have prevented some from joining. Furthermore, the new entrant required two 'seconders'. Thus the guild was able to regulate its membership. It is likely that what was demanded of a guild member was social respectability as, amongst other things, it was such people who were most likely to fulfil their obligations.[81]

The nature of the benefits offered by guild membership are revealed in the sixth and seventh statutes from Moreton and in the one added later. When a guild member died the guild funded a trental of masses to be performed within ten days. The living members of the guild were required to attend the funeral and to pay a farthing each as an offering for the soul of the departed. Each year the vicar was paid 4s. 4d. to say a mass every Sunday for 'booth the qwyke and the dede' and to pray each Sunday 'at the bedys tyme' for the whole company, both in this world and the next.

The funeral arrangements were further elaborated in 1504. When a brother died the guild paid five priests 4d. each, one of whom was to be the parish priest. These clerics accompanied the body to the church and sang a

dirge and mass for the departed's soul. The parish clerk and sexton were paid 4d. each; if there was no sexton, then 6d. was distributed to the parish poor in bread, this dole benefiting any poor guild members. If the departed had funded his own funeral arrangements, those provided by the guild were performed the following day. When a woman guild member died only two priests were provided to sing a dirge for her soul. Thus guilds were not necessarily a haven of sexual equality.

The guild offered its members the security of knowing that they would receive a good burial, and that their souls' journeys through Purgatory to Heaven would be aided by intercession, both soon after death and regularly thereafter. But security in the here-and-now was offered too. If a guild member was unable to support himself, either through old age or poverty, he received 4d. each week from the guild's goods, providing their total value remained above 40s.. If more than one person needed this charity the 4d. was to be divided amongst them.

Thus the guild was a body which sought to offer its members security and aid both in this world and the next, and as such it exemplified many of the qualities expected of Christian society as a whole. All forms of intercession relied on the trust that future generations would fulfil their obligations to their forbears. One of

the attractions of guild membership was the belief that the guild would continue, thus maintaining its duties to members who were dead.

With regard to charity, Susan Brigden says: 'The rich had a duty to the poor of providing work and alms: in return the poor owed obedience'.[82] Likewise, the guild had an obligation to help the poor, both among its membership and beyond: in return, it was perhaps not so much obedience as prayers which the poor owed. For example, the guild of Our Lady of Pity in Saffron Walden was founded in 1400 to support an almshouse.[83] Such charity gained the prayers of the poor for the guild as well as being a good work in itself.

The guild should not be regarded solely as a religious body however, for it had social obligations too, as is shown by the statutes from Moreton. Guild members owed obedience to the guild's officers, and to fail to comply with this provoked a fine. If two guild members were at odds with one another a solution to the matter was to be sought internally first. Only if this arbitration failed was the case to go to court. Those who went straight to court were fined by the guild.

Communal drinkings were organised, which meant that the guild enhanced its sense of communal identity by putting

the relationship between members on a social as well as a religious footing. That said, good behaviour was expected at such gatherings, and restrictions were put on the availability of drink. The obligation of the members to the guild is made clear in the last of the original statutes:

> Iso it is ordaynyde that qwhat brodyr or sustyr bereythe ye cowncell of thys forseyde gylde or of thys ordinance to any othyre straunge man, or woman, so that the co'peny be sclaunderyd, or have any othyr vylany therby, he schal payne yan to the fortherans of the forsayde gylde xld. or els he schall lefen the fraternyte for evyr more.

That the guild sought to encourage a well-ordered community at peace with itself is of little surprise. The whole basis of a Christian society was one of love between the Christian and his Lord and between man and man.[84] The attempted settlement of disputes internally had the temporal advantage, if successful, of avoiding the costs of both money and time which legal proceedings involved. Moreover it sought to create peace and reconciliation between two hostile factions. This was important, for those who were out of charity with their neighbours were formally barred from full participation in the mass, based on a passage in St Paul's first letter to the

Corinthians.[85] Indeed, for the laity at this time, the culmination of their active involvement in the mass was the kissing of the pax, which was a ritual show of peace.[86]

Guilds functioned primarily as voluntary organisations. The membership was bound by an oath, and the statutes looked at above sanctioned the punishment of members by fines if the rules were broken. If the worst came to the worst, a member could be banished from the guild, and thus from the benefits which membership offered. But the guild could only promote living in charity, it could not enforce this. The guild made more demands of its members than did the parish.[87] It also offered greater spiritual benefits. People became members of guilds because they wanted to be members of guilds. Most Essex guilds were small, parish organisations, with little or no property. These could offer most of their members few temporal benefits, if any. What they could offer was a sense of community, and religious services which were part of traditional Church teaching.

Sometimes, when things went wrong, a guild might be powerless to defend itself without the aid of a higher authority. For example, the Jesus guild of Prittlewell was involved in a case brought before the Court of Chancery. Initially an action was brought by Thomas

Anton, who was not a guild member, against Thomas Cocke, who was a former warden of the Jesus guild.[88] The former claimed that he legally rented a tenement from the guild, but his lease had fallen into Cocke's hands, who now used the tenement as if it was his own. In his defence, Cocke claimed it had been agreed by the guild's membership that Anton would rent the tenement but he would have use of it, for the guild forbad its members from renting land from the guild.

After this case, the guild itself brought an action against Cocke.[89] It was claimed that he had taken into his possession certain of the guild's papers, which was against the guild's statutes. The papers taken included the king's letters patent, the guild's foundation, and the guild's indenture with Anton. Cocke claimed that these had been delivered into his safe-keeping, were freely available to the guild at any time, and were no longer in his possession. These claims were subsequently denied by the guild. Judgement in neither case is known, but it is clear that a guild needed the cooperation of its members when it came to obeying guild statutes. It is also clear that a guild's concerns were not only religious.

Guilds were a part of parish life rather than being in competition with the parish. In Moreton the guild's services were performed by the parish priest, and he was

expected to be one of the priests officiating at guild funerals.[90] In Great Hallingbury the guild of Holy Trinity made regular contributions to the church.[91] In 1538 St Saviour's guild gave its parish church in Great Dunmow the money for a new pair of doors.[92] The altar at which a guild priest celebrated was more often than not found in the local parish church. Thus guilds represented many of the concerns of society in general, and should not be regarded as somehow removed from the mainstream.

4] THE CHURCH AND SOCIAL ORDER

Much of what guilds sought to do and promote was seen in parish life too. The provision of charity and intercession has been dealt with above. Concern for peace and trust within the community can be seen in a couple of other cases. When Robert Colet, the vicar of Little Wakering, complained that the parson of Paglesham had deprived him of certain tithes that were his, the emphasis of the complaint was that the parson had got eight men to swear that he was in the right 'uppon the holy evangilist'. In the plaintiff's mind these men were guilty of perjury, 'to the grat jopardie of the said parson and the parjured persons yf condinge ponysment and pennaunce should not be hade'.[93]

Clearly the vicar of Little Wakering wished to improve his own financial position. However, his complaint was couched in language which reveals a belief that perjured persons, people who had sworn an untruth in the name of God, were endangering their souls by that action, and that the danger could be relieved only by discovery, repentance and punishment. Similarly, when the parishioners of Great Waltham complained to Cardinal Wolsey about the theft of church goods, their grievance centred on the belief that the defence of the accused, John Cornysh, was perjured. At this time perjury was regarded as being so great a sin that it could be confessed only to a bishop.[94]

Theft was not the only disturbance with which a parish church had to put up during the early years of Henry VIII's reign. Edward Broke of Barking complained that he was attacked in his parish church. It is clear from the complaint of Broke, and the reply of one of the accused, Ralph Tracy, that there was much ill feeling within the parish. Broke claimed that one John Haryson had slandered him, which resulted in Broke losing his job. Not content with this, on Easter Day Haryson, Tracy and others had attacked Broke and illegally put him in the stocks at Great Ilford for three days and nights. In Tracy's account of these events it was Broke and another man who had attacked Haryson in the church, and Broke and the

other were detained with the agreement of the local justice of the peace.[95]

Which of these accounts was more accurate is less important here than the descriptions each made of these events. Broke claimed that when he was attacked he was:

> at Barkyng aforsaid in gods peace and yours and in the parisshe churche there/ entending to haue receyued the moost blyssed sacrament of the alter according to the godly order usid in Cristes relegion.

As has been stated above, only those who were at peace could receive the sacrament, while for most of the laity Easter was the only occasion during the year when communion was taken. Here Broke is clearly portraying himself as being 'in charity', despite the wrong done to him, and preparing to act as a true Christian should at Easter time. Thus the attack upon him was both vindictive and unchristian.

Even though Ralph Tracy described events very differently he was concerned to show a similar set of values. Broke is portrayed as a perjurer, for not only is he said to have been the one to break the peace, but it is claimed that he had taken the sacrament on Maundy Thursday. In this case, he had not only gone to church on

Easter Sunday with the intention of attacking Haryson, but had received communion while being in a state of hostility. Furthermore, it was Broke and his companion who caused disquiet, for their actions 'grettly troubled and dysturbyd' the gathered parishioners. Tracy and the others had acted with the law of the land and that of God on their side.

All three of the above cases were basically secular matters. In spite of this, all show that Christian notions were rooted in men's minds. In each the natural order of things in a Christian society is portrayed as having been contravened in some way. Furthermore, such illegal acts are seen as threatening the culprit's soul in the next world as much as the victim's well-being in this.

The sanctity of religious buildings was at risk not only from theft and brawling, however. Another case which came before the Star Chamber involved a murder committed in the sanctuary of St John's abbey, Colchester. In the two bills that survive John Raynfford denied that he had anything to do with the murder of one Michael, a servant of Sir Henry Marney.[96]

These documents reveal that there was a well defined lay community within this monastery. In the two depositions only one monk is mentioned, and he was very

much an extra in this drama. Various laymen are named, including 'Black Tom', who was 'a taylor by his ocupacyon & kepith a shoppe within the sayd seyntuary'.[97] In another passage, Raynfford said he took the mortally wounded Michael back to his chamber.[98] Thus this monastery had a fair amount of interaction with the lay population, if with a rather unsavoury group. These layfolk seem to have had a fairly well organised life within the monastery's walls.

For those in sanctuary the monastery was a central part of their life. Assuming they were avoiding civil justice, the sanctuary was an essential escape route, while the religious were determined to protect their privilege. In 1526 William Gilbank, having had a felony charge brought against him, took sanctuary in St John's abbey, Colchester. Later he left and went instead to the house of Crossed Friars in that town. When the king's officers demanded that the prior deliver Gilbank to them, he refused. The prior claimed that the privilege of sanctuary was as great for his house as it was for St John's, although he was unable to produce a grant for the liberty of sanctuary. The officers saw Gilbank in the choir, near to the high altar, but dared not take him.[99] Thus the power of the Church in such cases was recognised by officials and they were not prepared to risk going

against that power, even if doubt remained over how justified the claims of privilege were.

5] LOLLARDY IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ESSEX

The Church, however, could not boast total support during this period. Indeed, some in Essex were prepared to reject it totally and turn instead to Lollardy, which had been known in this county since the fifteenth century. For example, John Fynche, a tiler from Colchester, abjured before the bishop of Norwich in 1430, while 'scoles of heresie' were held in the house of John Abraham, a Colchester cordwainer, around that time.[100]

John Foxe recorded that in 1511 William Sweating and John Brewster were burnt at Smithfield. The latter came from Colchester, while Sweating had spent much of his adult life in Essex. Their offences included a belief that the sacrament of the altar was a memorial and not truly Christ's body, reading forbidden books, saying money spent on images and pilgrimages would be better spent on the poor, and associating with known heretics. Furthermore, both had previously abjured, and Sweating had stopped wearing the sign of a faggot which he had been ordered to do.[101] The bulk of evidence concerning Lollardy in sixteenth-century Essex, however, is to be

found in confessions obtained in 1528 by an inquiry headed by Cuthbert Tunstall, the bishop of London.[102]

In the 1520s Essex's two main centres of Lollardy were Colchester and Steeple Bumpstead, although other towns in the northern half of the county, such as Braintree, Witham, Boxted, Finchingfield and Coggeshall, also contained heretics. The inquiry discovered a couple of dozen names. As had been the case with the Lollards discovered in the diocese of Norwich the previous century, meetings were held in one another's houses, but there is no evidence of any formal services or liturgy.[103] Leading figures included John Hacker, who had a long history of heresy in areas ranging from the Chilterns, through London and up into East Anglia. Others of note were John Pykas, a baker from St Nicholas's, Colchester and John Tyball from Steeple Bumpstead.[104]

Although they did not believe what it taught, these Lollards did not shun the Church completely. William Sweeting served the prior of St Osyth's abbey, a house of Austin Canons, for over sixteen years. His influence was so great that the prior was required to abjure. Later, Sweeting was a holy water clerk in Colchester and it was the parson who employed him as such who removed the faggot badge.[105] It is worth noting that another sixteenth-century Lollard, Thomas Houre of Amersham,

Buckinghamshire, was also the holy water clerk for his parish church.[106] The wife of John Girlyng had lived twelve years earlier with a curate from Eccles, Thomas Eyers, who later was burnt for his heresy.[107] John Tyball disputed points of religion with two parish priests of Steeple Bumpstead, and converted to Lollardy a curate there, Richard Fox.[108]

The Lollards had a basic set of beliefs, which included denials of the Church's teaching on all the sacraments. Foremost was a rejection of transubstantiation, for Lollards claimed that after the bread and wine had been consecrated at mass it remained bread and wine. Some said that God's body was in Heaven,[109] while others argued that God and the Word were one and thus could not be separated.[110] Studies of Lollard groups in sixteenth-century London and Coventry have found a similar incredulity regarding the miracle of the mass, and this opinion was a central tenet of Lollard beliefs; indeed, similar objections had been raised in the Norwich trials a century earlier.[111]

Lollards in Essex also deemed it unnecessary to confess to a priest, but only to God. John Pykas had confessed yearly simply so that 'people shuld not wondre uppon hym', while Richard Fox used the opportunity of hearing Edmund Tyball's confession to teach him the Lollard view of the

eucharist.[112] Some asserted that true baptism was by the Holy Ghost, and that that with water was 'but a token of repentance'.[113]

Pilgrimages were regarded as being a waste of time and money. William Raylond reported that he had heard his son, Henry, and John Pykas assert:

> that it is mysavory to go on pilgremage to Walsynghm or Ipiswyche or any oder place for they be but idols and it is idolatrie for to go them in pilgremage and they can not help them self therfore they can not help a nother man.[114]

Fasting was felt to be of no benefit, but both Pykas and Fox said people should fast on Ember-days.[115] Sunday was the only holy day sanctioned by God, and it was denied that the Pope and other men of the Church had the authority to grant pardons. Furthermore, Lollards felt that it was unlawful to place lights before images, 'and so none of the said knowen men dyd euer sett up light before any Images'.[116] Similar objections to fasting, pilgrimages, holy days, clerical authority and images were typical amongst Lollard groups both at this time and in the fifteenth century.[117]

Some Essex Lollards were clearly very hostile to images. Richard Fox, the curate of Steeple Bumpstead and devotee of Lollardy, was reported to have said that if he had Wolsey's authority he would pull down all images in churches, 'for I fere me a great many of you synne in ydolatrye'.[118] Thomas Bowgas said that to set a taper before the sepulchre was like setting a candle before the Devil. Furthermore, he claimed that if he had the crucifix, images of Our Lady and other saints, and crosses on a ship, he would drown them all in the sea.[119]

Similar sentiments concerning images lead to action elsewhere in early sixteenth-century Essex. John Foxe recorded that in 1532 three men from Dedham, Essex, and another from East Bergholt, Suffolk, burned the rood of Dovercourt, which was reputed to have miraculous powers, a notion mocked by the rood's inability to defend itself. Three of the four, however, were hanged in chains for their crime.[120] Whether the motivation for this attack came from Lollardy, Protestantism, scepticism, or from mere iconoclasm is not known, but in later years Dedham did become an important Protestant centre. Clearly, however, opposition to images could run very deep indeed, and other acts of iconoclasm in Essex in the 1530s included the destruction of a cross in Stoke Park by John Leeward and his attack upon two images in the chapel there, the casting down of a crucifix on the highway to

Coggeshall, and the breaking of St Patronella's image in Great Horkesley church.[121]

To some extent the beliefs held by Essex Lollards varied with individuals. For example, William Raylond gladly heard John Pykas's teachings regarding the sacrament of the altar, but rebuked his son when he and Pykas said that man should pray to God alone and not to saints.[122] John Tyball believed that the souls of good men, except for saints, did not go to Heaven till the general resurrection. Rather, they remained in some place of joy and pleasure unless helped to Heaven by good prayer. He thought further that the souls of sinners remained in Purgatory unless delivered by prayer, although for a time he had doubted that Purgatory existed.[123]

Many of the Lollards had learnt or read the Scriptures in English and some possessed banned books. Indeed, books and access to the Scriptures in the vernacular were important touchstones of Lollard faith.[124] For example, Robert Best 'had knowlege in the Epistoles of James and could say them by hert'. Marion Mathew knew certain Epistles and Gospels, while John Girlyng could 'reherse a certayn Epistole of Paule'.[125] John Pykas had at various times: 'on booke of Powles Epistoles in Englishe'; an English New Testament which he bought in Colchester from a Lombard of London; a copy of The Prick of Conscience.

which was a poem long regarded with suspicion by the authorities; a book 'of the vij wise maisters of Rome'; one which began 'O Thow most gloriouse and excellant Lord'; and a book of 'Disputacio inter fratrem et clericum'.[126] These books were shared. For example, Robert Best borrowed Pykas's New Testament, 'which he hath in his custody by the space of a moneth togather'. In Coventry, too, Lollard tracts were circulated and widely used.[127]

Access to the Scriptures in English both helped formulate ideas on certain issues and provoked discussion. John Pykas's belief that true baptism was through the Holy Ghost was derived from his interpretation of the English New Testament.[128] John Tyball asserted on the authority of St Paul that every priest and bishop ought to have a wife, a view held by several of the Lollards tried in fifteenth-century Norwich.[129] John Pykas and John Girlyng, after discussing a chapter of St James's, declared that man should pray to God alone, while another discussion between these two led to a conclusion most disturbing for the Church authorities. They had:

> comyn to gether...uppon the xxij chapitore of Mathew wher Crist spake of Jherusalem and said to it if thow knowest thow woldest wepe for thier shall not a stone of the be left uppon a stone for thow shalbe distroyed

menyng therby priestes and men of the Church which hath stony hertes because the do ponyshe heretyckes and be stoberd of hert shuld rayne a whyle and in conclusion God wold stryke them and they shuld be distroyed for the ponysh of heretyckes.[130]

The Scriptures both helped to shape Lollard ideas, and gave strength to their resolve with the belief that, one day, they would triumph.

The connection between Lollardy and Protestantism is often ambiguous, and it is not the case that Lollards became Protestants once Reformation ideas spread from the Continent. For example, in 1527 Abraham Water, a Dutchman living in Colchester, abjured the belief that he could turn bread into the body of God as well as any priest.[131] Such an eccentric view of the 'priesthood of all believers' did not appear during the interrogation of the home-grown heretics.

However, there were certain links between the new creeds and the old heresy. John Tyball and Thomas Hilles bought copies of Tyndale's printed New Testament from Robert Barnes in London, and also showed him certain Lollard books.[132] In this case the Protestants were not interested in these Lollard texts, but from the 1530s onwards Lollard works were printed alongside Protestant

tracts, and Reformers often used Lollard works as precedents which justified the rejection of Rome.[133] In another case, John Pykas found a sermon preached by Thomas Bilney at Ipswich 'most goostly', and spread many of the opinions which it contained.[134]

Both Barnes and Bilney were Cambridge educated and had been influenced by Continental ideas; indeed, Barnes has been described as 'England's best known Lutheran'.[135] It seems, however, that the Lollards used such contacts mainly to reinforce old beliefs rather than to learn new ones.[136] Tyball and Hilles were primarily purchasing vernacular Bibles, while the teachings of Bilney which so impressed Pykas were that it was folly to go on pilgrimages, and man should pray to God alone. Both were beliefs which a Lollard a hundred years earlier would have held.[137]

Margaret Aston has asserted that 'Lollards might not actually make Protestants, but they could sow fertile seeds of doubt'. This can be seen in the case of Thomas Topley, an Austin friar from Clare in Suffolk. Topley read a copy of Wickliff's Wicket which was in the possession of Richard Foxe, Steeple Bumpstead's curate. This book's contention that the eucharist was merely a remembrance greatly troubled Topley, but he was only converted to this belief when he heard the Reformer Miles

Coverdale preach.[138] Thus Lollardy undoubtedly helped to provide an environment in which Protestantism could grow, but Lollards themselves did not necessarily adopt the new teachings.

It seems that Lollardy was insular and influenced only a few, with believers having close contacts with one another. John Pykas was first introduced to heresy by his mother, while all four of the Braintree Lollards named by John Hacker were from the same family.[139] Thomas Hilles was taught a chapter of St James's by a woman to whom he was contracted to marry, while later he became a servant of a Lollard tailor from Witham, Christopher Ravyn. Ravyn had two other servants of the same sect, and they were brothers.[140] As Lollards were liable to be punished and maybe even killed if discovered, it is not surprising that their faith was broached with only a trusted few. The household was a relatively secure unit in which such ideas could be taught and discussed and the tendency to use this unit has been noted in both fifteenth-century Norwich and sixteenth-century Coventry and South Buckinghamshire.[141]

Essex was certainly important in the history of later Lollardy. On the wider scale, however, Lollardy was not a part of the religious consciousness of the overriding majority of the laity in Essex prior to the break with Rome. As Andrew Hope says:

> there remains something insubstantial about Lollardy on the eve of the reformation. It lacked the weight to make an appeal beyond the limited circles of those who were disillusioned with the church or sceptical of its claims or who felt rejected by it, or who sought a faith verbally rather than symbolically expressed.[142]

Most accepted the sacraments as taught by the Church and believed in the benefits of praying to saints. Furthermore, they supported images, lights, pilgrimages and other pillars of the Church's structure with both actions and money.

6] SOME PROBLEMS OF THE PRE-REFORMATION CHURCH

Much that was wrong with the Church, and which affected the majority of the population, concerned clerical inadequacies. In a letter complaining to the patron of his benefice, the Charterhouse, London, written before 1516, Thomas Low, the vicar of Braintree, complained about the inadequacy of his living. The parish was large, and because of sickness Low had been obliged to buy a horse in order to visit his more distant parishioners. Yet his income was too small to support a horse, being barely enough to keep him; all the profits went to the

Charterhouse, and he could get nothing more from his flock.[143]

This priest feared he could not fulfil his duties to the parish. It was of course in Low's best interests to portray himself as the dutiful cleric who, despite sickness and poverty, was prepared to take on the burden of keeping a horse which he could not afford in order to perform his clerical duties. It was also in his interests to describe himself as being in the worst possible financial situation, since it was this that he was trying to amend. But it would be very cynical not to accept that this priest wished to perform his duties, and disliked barriers which prevented him from doing so.

The Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535 named 246 rectories, 130 vicarages and two benefices described as vicarages or rectories in Essex. Two-thirds of the rectories had an annual value of £15 or less, and just under thirty percent were worth £10 or less a year; over seventy percent of the vicarages were valued at £15 or less per annum, and nearly forty percent were in the category of £10 or less. It has been calculated that in about 1500 an income of £15 a year was the minimum required for an incumbent to employ an assistant chaplain, while if he served his cure alone £10 per annum would be needed to maintain an adequate standard of living.[144] Thus many of the benefices within this

county were inadequately funded, especially as prices were rising throughout the early sixteenth century. This in turn must have adversely affected both the ability of the incumbent to minister to his flock, as in the case cited above, and the calibre of cleric which such benefices attracted.

Pluralism was another way in which the proper serving of the population was threatened. This did not mean that a cure was left unattended. A curate, paid a stipend, would have been hired by the incumbent to administer in such parishes. But it is unlikely that such wages would have attracted many able members of the priesthood. For London it has been said: 'Though the beneficed clergy of the capital were well educated, the assistant clergy they found to serve their parishes hardly represented the flower of learning'.[145] Grants for priests to hold more than one cure were issued to Thomas Wodyngton in 1514, who held the parish of Bocking united to that of Southchurch, and to the rector of St Nicholas's, Colchester, that same year .[146] Thus it is certain that some of the laity of Essex did not have the quality of clergy that they would have wished.

However, the amount of intercession desired by the men and women of Essex suggests that anticlericalism was rare. Furthermore, the Edwardian chantry certificates reveal

that many of the unbeneficed priests which those institutions supported were expected to help serve the cure in which they were situated. This suggests that the need for a sufficient clerical ministration within a parish was recognised and that to help to provide such was regarded as being not only for the benefit of the parish, but also for the soul of the person who enabled this to be done. In other words, to provide a cleric to help in a parish was a good work, for it aided the salvation of others.

For example, by 1547 there was in the church of Braintree the 'St John the Baptist priest'. He both taught and assisted the curate, who otherwise would not have been able to cope.[147] Thomas Low would have probably agreed that such help was a necessity. Furthermore, the benefit was all the greater as the cost was borne by a lay patron; in his letter to the Charterhouse, Low had said that in order to fund his horse he had no curate.[148] Other unbeneficed priests whose specific duties included helping to serve the cure were to be found in Coggeshall, Bocking, Littlebury, Salcott, Great Baddow, St Leonard's in Colchester, Layer Marney, Rayleigh, Little Bentley, Great Chesterford, Copfield and Barking.[149] In Great Burstead a priest was funded to sing mass and minister the sacraments in a chapel which was over a mile from the church. The chapels at Great Horkesley, Laindon, Shearing

and Ramsden Belhouse were situated a similar distance from their parish churches.[150]

On the eve of the Reformation the Church provided the people of Essex with a comprehensive system to deal with both this world and the next. This system was accepted by the majority of the population, and when the final reckoning approached the wills of most people supported or showed a belief in it. There was room for improvement, of course, and inadequacies no doubt provoked criticism. But the overriding impression is that the traditional religious order was in full working order. It also seemed set to continue.

The parish church clearly acted as a focal point for the parishioners, both in its religious role and also in the creation of a wider sense of community. Indeed, these two themes should be regarded as being very closely linked: one of the roles of the priest within his parish was that of peace-maker, so he sought to maintain reconciliation and social harmony.[151]

Churches continued to receive gifts on the eve of the Reformation. Nowadays, the evidence of this is seen mainly in extant wills and churchwardens' accounts, but the true extent will never be known. Architectural evidence shows that church-building during this period was

not confined to those churches for which written records remain.[152] Gifts to the Church were not made only by the dying, while many of these are likely to have provided fittings, plate, vestments and other paraphernalia of religious practice which were soon to disappear.

The eschatological concerns of the majority of the population seem to have been satisfied by the Church, too. The doctrine of Purgatory was widely accepted, as is shown both by the large number of guilds in the county, and by the fact that the majority of testators actively sought intercession. The reasonably pious and contrite Christian must have been confident that one day he or she would reach Heaven. Eschatology also helped to bind the Christian community with a common purpose. The living were bound with the dead by their obligation to try to hasten the release of souls from Purgatory. The living were bound together by the desire to keep the system of intercession maintained, for in the long run it was in their benefit to see it continue.

As Peter Heath has found with the testators of Hull, the Essex wills which date from the three decades prior to the gathering of the Reformation Parliament show little manifestation of an overpowering torment about the fate of the soul. Heath says: 'This very calmness and moderation could well be a sign of a sure and profound faith in the

not confined to those churches for which written records remain.[152] Gifts to the Church were not made only by the dying, while many of these are likely to have provided fittings, plate, vestments and other paraphernalia of religious practice which were soon to disappear.

The eschatological concerns of the majority of the population seem to have been satisfied by the Church, too. The doctrine of Purgatory was widely accepted, as is shown both by the large number of guilds in the county, and by the fact that the majority of testators actively sought intercession. The reasonably pious and contrite Christian must have been confident that one day he or she would reach Heaven. Eschatology also helped to bind the Christian community with a common purpose. The living were bound with the dead by their obligation to try to hasten the release of souls from Purgatory. The living were bound together by the desire to keep the system of intercession maintained, for in the long run it was in their benefit to see it continue.

As Peter Heath has found with the testators of Hull, the Essex wills which date from the three decades prior to the gathering of the Reformation Parliament show little manifestation of an overpowering torment about the fate of the soul. Heath says: 'This very calmness and moderation could well be a sign of a sure and profound faith in the

Christian gospel, for the abiding impression left by these wills is one of unclouded hope'.[153]

Thus the Church in Essex on the eve of the Reformation was not on the brink of collapse. Few were opposed to it. It is likely that some desired improvements, but what was witnessed over the next forty years was fundamental change.

CHAPTER TWO

THE HENRICIAN REFORMATION

On 28 March 1538 Sir Giles Capell, an Essex justice of the peace, presided over a case brought against William Smyth of Shalford, a servant of Sir Roger Wentworth. This concerned words spoken against the king at Braintree on 27 February in the victualling house of John Luke.[1] The commotion began when William Hunte, a minstrel from Finchingfield, exhorted John Tomkyns to read and learn the New Testament. Tomkyns replied that he was 'onlerned and that he wold not medle ther with'. There then broke out the following argument between Smyth and Hunte:

SMYTH: Hunte thowgh thow be nowght thy selfe entyce none oder men to be bad as thow arte.

HUNTE: Wherin doist thow thynke me nowght?

SMYTH: Mary in this, that thow dedist syng a song at Henry Davyes bredell of Wathersfelde in the whiche song thow dedist rayle agayns sayntes callyng the images of sayntes in the churches but idolles.

HUNTE: I say those images of sayntes that be made by mannys handes be butt idolles, and sett up in tymes past by the bysshop of Rome, and now the kyng ys supreame hed of the churche in this realme and the bysshop of Rome hath no thyng to

do here amongest us of this realme, as thow Smyth hast ofte hard declared unto the and other in the parisshe churche.

SMYTH: I pray yow gode sir hathe ther not ben in this realme of Englond rayneng over us as wyse kynges as this kyng that ys now, and yet all they obeyed unto the pope? And at this day all kynges of other realmes do so still. And therfore I wold well who gave this kyng leve to put the popes power downe?

Prior to the Reformation few did not accept the teachings of the Church. That institution provided the laity with a system with which they were accustomed and, on the whole, happy, while to question the truths which the Church taught was to be guilty of the grave sin of heresy. The security of this certainty, however, came to an end with the break from Rome and the various changes to religious doctrine and practice which occurred in the thirty years or so following.

Perhaps for the first time people had choices to make, and the three main options appear in the case cited above. Some, such as William Hunte, would adopt the new teachings, and so reject the Roman Catholic past. Others, such as William Smyth, would remain loyal to that past, even at the risk of treason against the king. Then there

were those who would follow the example of John Tomkyns, and try to avoid any overt commitment, but rather keep their true beliefs to themselves. How many followed each course is a question which needs to be addressed although it is hard, perhaps impossible, to answer conclusively.

It has been asserted that the vulnerability of the old order came from indifference towards it, stemming from an habitual acceptance of ways which seemed set to continue, and because the changes came out of a fairly clear sky and picked off targets piecemeal, rather than because of any hostility which was felt towards it.[2] In Essex there was no spontaneous popular expression of Reformed fervour once the pope had been cast aside. By the death of Henry, however, changes in religious practice were clearly noticeable at local level, and these did bring about alterations in religious activities and attitudes amongst the laity.

1] PARISH CHURCHES AND PARISH LIFE

The extant churchwardens' accounts from between 1531 and the end of Henry's reign reveal how some things changed during that period. Some of the six regular sources of income which the churchwardens of Great Hallingbury had received throughout the 1520s continued, unchanged, until

the death of Henry, such as the 12d. rent from the cow left by John Thurgood to fund a taper. Wax silver was collected throughout this period, and the beastwardens' contribution was not made only in 1543. Otherwise, the income from that source varied between 29s. ½d. which was forthcoming in 1533, and 6s. 10d. received in 1545.[3]

When the other three types of income are turned to, the end of Peter's Pence is the easiest to explain. This collection was last made in 1533/4.[4] The Dispensations Act (1534) put an end to this payment, as it did promptly throughout the country.[5] In the accounts, the payment of this tax to Rome was always coupled with the payment of Paul's Pardon. This second outlay continued for two more years, but does not appear after 1535/6.[6] While the reason for this is not clear, wills, too, show a decline in offerings to St Paul's Cathedral from 1531 onwards. Prior to then around a third of testators remembered their mother church, but in the first half of the 1530s the figure dropped to twelve percent. Between 1536 and 1540 only four percent of wills made such a bequest, and in the 1540s the figure was a mere one percent.[7]

The profits from Great Hallingbury's Passion Sunday church ale are recorded in thirteen of the fourteen years between 1526 and 1539. In the other year, 1528, the churchwardens referred to a collection from the whole

parish 'att ther comyng on'.[8] From 1540, in six of the seven years there is recorded a collection from the parish towards the costs of making the sepulchre light.[9] In 1542, when such a collection is not mentioned, there appear the receipts from 'Medlent Sonday at our drynkyng'.[10] Passion Sunday is the fifth Sunday in Lent, so it is likely that the 1542 event was a direct descendant of the church ales of the 1520s and 1530s.

The 1538 entry states that the money received on Passion Sunday was to maintain the sepulchre light, so it is fair to conclude that the church ales and the collections for the sepulchre light were very closely related.[11] When the incomes received at the Passion Sunday celebrations are looked at, it is clear that they were fairly popular. The lowest return was in 1539 when 6s. was made; prior to that, incomes varied between the 7s. received in 1527, 1531 and 1534, and 9s., which was the total in 1529 and 1533.[12] In 1528, when no drinking is referred to, the amount collected from the parish was 4s. 8d.. Between 1540 and 1546, when collections were made for the sepulchre light, the income varied between 2s. 11d. in 1546, and 4s. 4d. the year before.[13] Not surprisingly, therefore, more money came into the church's coffers when a social activity was organised than when only a collection was made.

Why, then, did this church ale end? It is true that the event in 1539 reaped the smallest reward, but it would be wrong to conclude that this showed the popularity of such events was on the wane. The profit forthcoming in 1539 was greater than on any occasion when only a collection was made. Furthermore, in 1542, when a Mid-Lent drinking was held, the churchwardens received 12s. 7d., which by far exceeds the profits of any of the earlier church ales. This, together with the fact that two church ales held the previous year - when is not specified - made 5s. 7½d. and 3s. 4d. respectively, shows that such events retained a degree of popular support, and thus had the potential to raise money for the church.[14] Official opposition to such events began only in 1547,[15] but it is possible that this earlier lack of activity was brought about because of unease generated by the many changes in religious life in general.

The contribution by the collectors of the guild of Holy Trinity to the church of Great Hallingbury ended in the early 1540s, although for a few years more the church received rent for guild livestock. Possible reasons for the passing of this body will be looked at when guilds are considered later in this chapter. Here it will suffice to say that another change in church finance was witnessed.

In Great Dunmow, too, many of the church's sources of income had ended by the time Henry VIII died. Ploughfeasts and Lords of Misrule ceased to appear in the churchwardens' accounts in the early 1540s, while the celebration of Corpus Christi Day was last recorded in 1543, and May Day is not mentioned after 1545.[16] The nature of these celebrations, and what pressures contributed to their end will, be considered in Chapter Six. It is probable, however, that their demise reflects unease in matters of religion, maybe coupled with some pressure from above, rather than indicating a desire to sweep away the old order motivated by Reformed religious fervour.

Even though the period between 1531 and 1546 was one of intense change and uncertainty, the Church did continue to evoke support and some investment. Fewer wills made bequests to the testator's local church than had done prior to 1530, but between 1531 and 1546 nearly twenty percent of the wills looked at still remembered the parish church. While that last figure remained fairly constant during the last decade and a half of Henry's reign, the percentage of wills which left something to the church of another parish fell. The pre-Reformation figure was halved to just over ten percent in the period 1531 to 1535; by the 1540s the figure was under five percent. As is shown above, a similar pattern was to be seen in the

numbers of wills which remembered St Paul's Cathedral. Hence, while many still saw the Church as being important, fewer were willing to show their support by financial contribution, especially to institutions beyond the immediate vicinity.[17]

As is the case with the pre-Reformation period, some wills from the later Henrician era provide evidence of specific works which were undertaken. Most of these were similar to projects of the earlier period. For example, the will of Alice Samms of Great Totham, written in 1540, left 13s. 4d. towards the repair of the steeple of the church in the neighbouring parish of Langford. The steeple of Stanford Rivers' church was remembered in a will in 1537, while four years later the church of Leigh was left 6s. 8d. to help fund shingling.[18]

An even more ambitious project was undertaken in Barking in the 1540s. Two wills from 1541 made donations towards the new aisle of the church, the second making the stipulation 'if it goes forth'; 20s. was left towards the same project in 1545. That this work was indeed completed is indicated by the will of Thomas Fuller, husbandman, written in June 1547; in this he left 6s. 8d. to be buried in the new aisle of Barking church.[19]

Further projects funded by the concerted effort of a parish are to be found in the churchwardens' accounts of Great Dunmow in the 1530s. In 1530/1 a collection raised £6 8s. 9d. for a new set of organs, to which 149 people contributed. Further collections were made in 1533 for 'reprasyons [sic] of new gyld' (52 contributors, total 8s. 7d.); between 1534-6 for a new bell (43 contributors, total £2 14s. 10d.); and in 1538 for a great bell clapper (52 contributors, total 4s. 4d.) and for latten candlesticks (75 contributors, total 9s. 6d.).[20] That all these collections record fewer contributors than those made in this parish in the 1520s may reflect a growing discontent with the Church, but a more likely cause was uncertainty and the wish not to invest in things no longer safe from attack.

The undertakings of these later years were not on the same scale as, say, the construction of the new steeple which had been funded in like manner in 1526/7. A possible reason for this is that in the mid-1530s the church of Great Dunmow experienced some financial difficulties. The accounts of 1534-6 record the sale of thirty-two ounces of church plate for £5 19s. 2d.; other sources of income, such as from rents and the profits made at Corpus Christi time, totalled £9 10s. 10d.. It was only because of the sale of plate that the accounts balanced, for without it the churchwardens would have made

a loss of £5 16s. 10d..[21] And things did not improve the next year. Then, fifteen ounces of plate, a silver pax and two cruets were sold for 4 marks 20d., but the final accounts were in the black by only 3d..[22]

These sales sought to rectify the poor financial state in which the church found itself, a situation brought about by the cost of work done on the church. In the period covered by the 1534-6 accounts the costs of a new bell and the hanging of the same came to £7 7s. 10d., which was much more than what was collected for this project. The reason for this lack of support might be that at a time of religious upheaval and unease many parishioners felt it was risky to invest in an item which, in the future, might be confiscated, and so they did not. Without the support of the parish, this purchase strained the finances of the church, hence requiring other methods of raising money to be adopted. The other set of accounts record the making of guttering between 'the newe warke and the chaunsell'. Thus the church responded to an extra cost at a time of financial crisis with extraordinary measures.

Not all parishes were in a position to fund necessary works on their churches during this period. Alterations to the religious establishment, however, occasionally allowed other methods to be employed. The dissolution of

the monasteries meant that patronage of many Essex churches passed into the king's hands. A couple of parishes turned to the sovereign with requests to have the inadequacies of their churches put right.

Little Horkesley priory was one of the six Essex monasteries which Cardinal Wolsey had dissolved in 1525 to endow his colleges at Oxford and Ipswich. With the fall of the Cardinal this property reverted to the crown. The priory had been patron of Boxted church, a building which was clearly in some decay when John Hawlle, the farmer of Little Horkesley, wrote to Thomas Cromwell in 1533. He reported that the chancel was in such a bad state the priest had not been able to minister there for a month and called upon Cromwell to cause it to be repaired, as the prior had in times past, 'by cause yow haue ye rule & ouersyght off hyt'. Whether this appeal gained a response is not clear.[23] However, a petition by the inhabitants of Waltham Holy Cross was successful.

When Waltham abbey, the last English monastery to be dissolved, fell in March 1540 the inhabitants of that parish saw the opportunity to right a wrong of long standing. The abbey and parish churches were joined by a common tower, which stood at the west end of the abbey church and the east end of the parish church: this contained a clock and eight bells. The parishioners

requested that Sir Anthony Denny mediate with the king so that the clock and five of the bells, or however many the king was willing to spare, be given to the parish. They claimed that this should be done because Henry II had altered Waltham church, which was then collegiate, by replacing the college with an abbey which was separated from the parish church. When he did this he had reserved all the bells for the abbey. The abbey was now dissolved, and the parish was without bells and did not have enough money to buy one. The parishioners did secure the five bells they desired, although it is unclear whether these had to be paid for or not.[24]

During the 1530s and 1540s money was still spent on traditional church decor and furnishings. In Great Dunmow a silver pyx was purchased in 1530/1, and the following year a cross was gilded. As is noted above, between 1534 and 1536 some church plate was sold; in 1538 the parish sought to replace some of this loss. Together with the collections made for a bell clapper and the latten candlesticks mentioned above, money was also received from the parish for a new tabernacle, and from the St Saviour's guild towards new church doors.[25] All these items were soon bought.[26] In addition, the wives of the parish made a collection to recover the pax.[27] This was done from Robert Maye, one of the churchwardens who had overseen the sale of that item.[28] It is not clear whether Maye made a

profit from this exchange or if he had given the church a loan and the pax was his surety. In 1542/3 a canopy was made and a man was paid 'ffor payntyng the dyalle in the churche'.[29] Throughout these years the upkeep of church gear is recorded too. This included the maintenance of books, while between 1534 and 1536 both St John's altar and that of St George were varnished.[30]

Elsewhere in Essex there is a similar story. The churchwardens of Great Hallingbury paid for a 'halfe portas' in 1532/3.[31] A portesse is a portable breviary, and it appears that the parish paid half the cost of a new one: the priest probably paid the rest. In 1539/40 a tankard for carrying holy water was paid for, while a canopy cloth to cover the holy sacrament was made in 1542/3.[32] In 1545/6 a cross was erected in the churchyard and 'too lattany bouks to syng theron' were purchased.[33]

Money was left in wills for the repair of the church books of Harwich in 1540 and to build stools in the church of Great Bardfield in 1542. The church of Ramsden Bellhouse was left 20d. towards the painting of Our Lady's tabernacle in 1535, that of Hornchurch was left 20 marks to repair a silver cross in 1538, while in 1542 £4 was left to the church of Upminster towards a new font.[34]

A few changes in religious practice in parish churches can be seen, however. The injunctions of 1538 required all parishes to buy a Bible and to extinguish all lights, except those on the high altar, the roodloft or before the Easter sepulchre. Images of saints which had been abused by pilgrimage or offerings were to be removed, and those which remained were to be regarded simply as memorials. People were to be prepared for the removal of more images later, while the veneration of relics was rejected.[35]

The churchwardens' accounts of Great Dunmow, which prior to this time mention a sepulchre light, a roodlight and lights before the images of St Mary in both the church and the chancel, record no such lights in 1538/9.[36] A sepulchre light is mentioned at Easter 1540,[37] and only after that does a roodlight reappear in the records. The lights before the images of St Mary are not mentioned again. This suggests that in the period immediately after the injunctions had been issued the churchwardens, rather than risk contravening the royal will, proscribed all lights until the nature of the injunctions was fully understood. However, there is no record of the removal of the images of St Mary before the reign of Edward. Thus whilst this parish sought to comply with the orders from the government, it seems that this was not because they were agreed with. Indeed, it is possible that the lights were extinguished in order to protect the images of St

Mary from being removed due to them having been abused by offerings.

In Great Hallingbury there was more continuity. The sepulchre light was recorded in the churchwardens' accounts for all the years of Henry's reign, as was the taper of John Thurgood. In 1536/7 this was described as 'a lyght befor ye rood in ye chuncell' and in 1540/1 as 'a lyght before ye sacrement'; in other words, this taper did not contravene the injunctions.[38] Furthermore, the light maintained by the beastwardens for the well-being of stock continued to be funded by the parish.

As with legacies to the churches themselves, from 1531 there was a decline in bequests to lights before images within parish churches. From around twenty percent of wills making such bequests before 1530, the figure fell to about fifteen percent in the 1530s, before dropping to eleven percent of wills between 1541 and 1543, and six percent between 1544 and 1546.[39] No doubt the injunctions of 1538, and the subsequent putting out of some lights, meant that there were fewer lights to which money could be left. Indeed, after 1538 to burn a light before an image risked having that image classified as superstitious, which could result in it being removed altogether.[40] Furthermore, people would be less willing to invest in those lights which remained because doubts must have been

raised about both the benefits of such bequests and the future of those lights.

The positive advance of Reformed religious practice is seldom seen in churchwardens' accounts. An addition to the end of Great Dunmow's accounts for 1538/9 records the payment of 8s. 'whych was tower the bying of the byble', and the next set of accounts mention a payment 'for the halfe of the byble': the incumbent would have paid the balance.[41] Thus the 1538 injunctions were being complied with.

The means by which the Word was brought to the parishioners of Great Hallingbury was provided slightly later. The churchwardens' accounts of 1541/2 record a payment for 'the halfe Bibille', and the following year 3d. was paid 'for a chayn for ye Byble & fyxyng ye same'. This was in response, no doubt, to the royal proclamation of 1541 which ordered that churchwardens either buy a Bible or be fined.[42] But even if a church had an English Bible the benefits were limited. For a start, few could read, while the Act for the Advancement of the True Religion (1543) restricted Bible reading to society's higher male echelons.[43]

Priests were the most important means by which the people could be informed of the changes that were

occurring. The government recognised the need to control what was being preached and used injunctions, circulars and other such missives to try to achieve this.[44] However, not all parishes had priests who disseminated the government's policies. In the 1540s the parish of Mount Bures reported that there was no priest there.[45] Around the same time the vicar of Tolleshunt Major was reported for not preaching sermons: similar cases were reported from Langley, East Mersea, Dovercourt, Laxden, Elsenham, West Bergholt, Black Notley, Mile End and West Mersea.[46]

Even if a priest did preach, not all parishioners attended church. Absence from divine service was a fairly common charge in the act books of the archdeaconry of Colchester from the 1540s. These include one Colchester parish where it was claimed that, of over three hundred houseling people, 'the on halffe off them usualy comyth not to the parocch chyrche uppon the Sonday and Holey days'.[47]

If the people did not hear the message their opinions would not be moulded in the way desired by the authorities. But even if they did hear it was not certain that they understood. The curate of Harwich, Thomas Corthop, was accused of leaving his parishioners confused when, for example, he preached concerning the Antichrist, but did not identify him.[48] Comprehension was made even

less likely by preachers disagreeing among themselves. Both Corthop and the priest of Langham spoke against the 'newfangledness' of Reformers.[49] At Mistley the Reformer Friar Ward argued against an earlier sermon made there which had claimed that holy water washed away venial sin.[50] Indeed, all Reformers argued against much of what had been taught previously. These disagreements must have brought doubt into the minds of many more people than were actually converted.

However, several cases which were brought before the archdeacon of Colchester show that people in various parishes wanted sufficient priestly ministration and the cure to be served in traditional ways.[51] For example, the parishioners of Pattiswick complained when their parson threatened to get rid of the curate for they claimed that one cleric was not enough to serve the cure properly. A chantry priest from Saffron Walden was reported for failing 'to mayntene good servys in the quere in singing and redynge'; Clive Burgess has shown the importance attached to the contribution made by such priests to the liturgy and music in the churches of later Medieval Bristol. John Lyes of Little Tey complained that his parson: did not perform evensong on Saturdays; had not said mass on Corpus Christi day and Annunciation day; had not blessed the font at Whitsuntide; made neither holy bread nor holy water on Trinity Sunday; and had an

unseemly relationship with Anne, the wife of Roger Stowe.[52]

A complaint came from Black Notley that the priest did not hear confession, the people did not know where to find him at times of need, and he had not read the Six Articles nor the king's injunctions for half a year. In West Bergholt, too, the priest had failed to read the king's injunctions, the Ten Commandments and the Creed, and had supplied insufficient sermons. He had also allowed two parishioners to die unshriven.[53]

In both these cases the clerics concerned had failed to comply with requirements ordered by the government. Both had also failed to provide their parishioners with sacraments which, although upheld by the Henrician church, were antithetical to Protestant teachings. Is it possible, therefore, that the parishioners were more concerned that these rites were performed than with hearing sermons, injunctions and other such teachings? If so, did they merely use the absence of the latter to try to condemn clerics who were not, in the parishioners' minds, providing for them as they should?

Parishioners also reported those amongst them who broke the peace. Hence people were reported for not attending church, especially if they kept 'evil rule' during service

time. For example, John Colfelde of Fordham was reported for troubling the parish because his dissensions in the church prevented the priest from performing divine service.[54] In another case, John Ellys of White Notley was reported because he gave his dog holy bread and so showed contempt for that ceremony.[55]

Cases such as those cited above give little impression that Reformed ideas had become part of the popular consciousness by the 1540s, although many were apparently aware of the changes which had taken place. There was certainly a curtailment of traditional practices and activities, but that was probably due to unease rather than conversion to the Reformed faith.

2] WILLS AND INTERCESSION

The decline in bequests to churches and those lights within them was not the only change in the religious content of wills after 1530. Indeed, with the exceptions of guilds, which never featured very prominently in bequests, and gifts specifically for the poor, all traditional forms of pious giving fell during the period 1531 to 1546.[56]

At first there was little change in the percentage of testators who left their soul to God, St Mary and the saints. Over eighty percent still used this formula in the period 1531 to 1535. Although numbers employing such a preamble fell in subsequent years, in the three years before Henry died sixty percent of wills still began in that manner.

The first will to use a preamble which tended towards Protestantism was written in August 1532. The soul was dedicated to Christ alone, who is described as 'Lord God my saviour and redeemer of mankind'.[57] Some later Henrician wills stated a belief in Protestant eschatology, with the testators trusting that their souls would be saved only through the merits of Christ's death and passion. However, by the end of Henry's reign a mere ten percent of testators chose to employ such fully Reformed preambles.

The preamble which saw the greatest growth in this period was that which left the soul to God alone. Up to 1535 about five percent of wills began this way, but in the following eight years around fifteen percent of testators employed this formula. One in four testators used it between 1543 and 1546. It is possible that many testators who in earlier times might have used a traditional preamble chose a neutral one at this time of

uncertainty and confusion, for such preambles did not necessarily mean that the testators doubted traditional Church teachings. A small percentage of testators had always used such a formula, and it has been shown in the previous chapter that to do so in earlier times was not a sign of discontent with the Church's teachings, for most went on to make traditional bequests. Similarly, wills written between 1531 and 1546 which began by leaving the soul to God alone were no less likely to contain traditional pious bequests than were wills which began with a traditional preamble.

When the percentage of wills leaving the soul to God, St Mary and the saints is added to those who left it to God alone, the resulting figure is fairly constant for the whole period 1500 to 1546. It begins at eighty-eight percent for 1500-10, peaks at ninety-five percent in the 1520s, and remains in the high eighties after the break with Rome. The lowest figure is for the period 1544-6, when it is eighty-five percent.

Hence, although a shift in the style of preambles certainly occurred, this alone is not proof of a decline in traditional beliefs, nor of the spread of more Reformed ideas. Furthermore, the preamble is not necessarily a definite indication of the beliefs of the testator. For example, three wills from the 1540s began by leaving the

soul of the testator in the hands of Christ, seemingly indicating a tendency towards the new teachings, but went on to require intercession to help the soul, which was against all that Protestantism taught.[58]

It is clear that between 1531 and 1546 there was no decline in the desire for a proper funeral. Indeed, there was an increase in the number of wills which specified that the body was to be 'brought honestly to earth'. This rose from under ten percent prior to 1530 to around twenty percent from 1536 onwards. A possible explanation is that after 1531 there was less certainty that adequate provision would be made for the deceased and so more testators thought it advisable to provide a reminder in the will. However, this alteration may simply indicate a stylistic change.

Change is most noticeable when investment in the traditional religious order is considered. Between 1500 and 1530 over ninety-seven percent of wills had some pious element, such as bequests for intercession, to the Church or for charity. This figure fell to ninety percent between 1531 to 1535. By 1541-3 twenty percent of wills made no religious bequest apart from the repose of the soul and body, and during the last three years of Henry's reign a quarter of wills did not contain such bequests.

The decline in bequests to churches and their lights has been considered in Section One. There was also a fall in numbers who left something to the high altar, a bequest which was often specified as being for forgotten tithes. From over eighty-five percent before 1530, the figure fell until only just over half the wills looked at from between 1544 and 1546 made such a bequest.

There was a decline, too, in the percentage of wills which requested earthly intercession for the souls of the departed. As was shown in the previous chapter, the desire for intercession was very strong in the years before the break with Rome, and over seventy percent of wills had expressly sought some form of it. During the first half of the 1530s sixty percent of testators sought aid for their souls, and this figure fell to around fifty percent between 1536 and 1543. During the final years of the Henrician period the figure dropped to forty-two percent. This pattern may indicate a decline in belief in the efficacy of such provisions. Alternatively, it might show a decline in confidence that such provisions would be enacted.

There had been some doubts over the practical means by which people would be able to provide intercession prior to the break with Rome. Alan Kreider states:

> by the end of the fifteenth century the crown, by means of its coordinated policies of charging exorbitant fines for mortmain licences and of granting them only in exceptional circumstances, had taken a position profoundly hostile to the founding of intercessory institutions. In fact...some Englishmen began to fear that new legislation might soon be introduced to confiscate the chantries which had been founded by feoffments or for terms of years.[59]

Kreider goes on to assert that the royal initiative against such institutions was not unexpected when it finally came in the 1530s. This seems to be backed up by a will from Barking dated 1 May 1528. John Hyde left the churchwardens a piece of land to fund an obit for the souls of himself, his parents, wife, children, friends and all Christians. This was to continue 'as the law of the land will suffer it'. If the law changed, however, the property was to be sold and the money used to buy vestments in the honour of God, St Mary and St Margaret, the latter being the saint to whom his parish church was dedicated.[60]

After the break with Rome there was confusion over the government's stance on Purgatory. Protestants did not accept that there was such a place, claiming the doctrine had no scriptural basis. Furthermore, the Reformers were

not slow in making their objections known. The result was that in June 1534 Archbishop Cranmer ordered preachers to dwell on the usurped power of the bishop of Rome and the justification of the king's matrimonial dispute. They were to avoid controversial topics such as Purgatory, the cult of saints, justification by faith alone and like subjects.[61]

That the dispute over Purgatory had reached parish level is shown in the articles against Thomas Corthop, curate of Harwich, which were composed in 1535. One of these reads:

> Item the xxij day of August the said Sir Thomas Carthope in the pulpet within the churche of Harwich said here be somen that doth groge by cause I have preached of purgatory but nowe I dare boldly speke of it and preach of it to you for I have spoken with myn ordenary the bisshop of London of late and he hath shewed me so that it be not ayenst no thing that is graunted by act of parliament we may preache as we have don in tyme past and thus perswadeth the kings loving subiects not to regard his graces comaundment except in be in thinges granted by act of parliament.[62]

Thus some parishioners objected to certain traditional Catholic teachings and were willing to report a priest who

still taught these. They claimed that Corthop was guilty of treason because he had implied that the king's power was not absolute, but required parliamentary sanction.

The last of the Ten Articles (1536) dealt with Purgatory, but only in a vague way. The traditional Catholic view clearly had been rejected, however. Purgatory was placed amongst the articles which dealt with ceremonies not necessary for salvation, and the article emphasised that no man was obliged to perform intercession for the souls of the departed. The article states that neither the name nor nature of Purgatory is not known, and that the whole issue of salvation is to be referred solely to God.[63]

Thereafter the position of Purgatory became even less secure. While most areas of theology took a conservative turn after 1536, teaching on Purgatory continued on a Reformist course. As early as 1537 Henry VIII was considering dispensing with the concept of Purgatory, and the 'King's Book' (1543) officially removed it from the teaching of the English Church.[64] Hence it is not surprising that fewer testators provided for intercession in the 1530s and 1540s than had done so in earlier times. Events such as the dissolution of the monasteries showed that the threat to intercessory institutions was very real indeed.

The percentages of wills providing for each form of intercession fell after 1530. The number which sought to fund a chantry or a stipendiary priest dropped from over ten percent before 1530 to around three percent after that date. Those requiring trentals halved from the pre-Reformation figure to fifteen percent between 1531 and 1535, and continued to fall to just four percent between 1544 and 1546. Furthermore, by the late 1530s only half the number of wills provided for obits as had done so in the 1520s, with around ten percent making the necessary bequests. This figure, too, was a mere four percent in the three years prior to Henry's death. After 1530 only one of the wills looked at remembered a religious house.

The more expensive methods of intercession, such as chantries and stipendiary priests, suffered the largest initial drop. Furthermore, testators seem to have sought less intercession in their wills. After 1531 people tended to make arrangements for either an obit or a trental, whereas in earlier times the provision of both had been quite common. This may indicate a continued desire to aid one's soul, whilst reflecting unease as to the continued provision of such help, with testators not wanting to lose too much property if intercession did come to an end. Doubts about whether desired intercession would be provided are shown in the will of Robert Lanesdall of Theydon Garnon, dated October 1543. He left

5s. to the curate to be prayed for, but continued that 'if he will not receive the money before named I will it to my wife Joan to help her and my younger child'.[65]

The figure which held up the best was also the formula which was most vague, that is to say when a testator stipulated that the residue of his or her goods was to be disposed of for the health of the soul. Under thirty percent of wills had said this in the 1520s, and during the next decade the percentage remained in the twenties, before falling to around seventeen percent between 1541 and 1546.

However, an unwillingness to invest in these forms of intercession does not necessarily mean that intercession itself was no longer desired, for other methods were maintained. For example, it is clear that religious guilds continued right up to the time when Edwardian legislation acted against them. The guild of Holy Trinity in Saffron Walden has left a string of records from the reign of Henry VIII. These include a grant in 1523 to acquire land to the yearly value of £10 in order to support a chaplain-cum-schoolmaster for the school which a Joan Bradbury intended to found. Grants for fairs were issued in both 1514 and 1542. Then, from the feast of Holy Trinity 1545, there are extant the accounts of the guild.[66]

This guild's activities went far beyond the merely religious. Among the various sources of income were the market, rent from various properties, a Mid-Lent fair and a St Ursula fair. But to the end of Henry's reign the religious element remained strong, with the accounts including two lists of members making their annual subscriptions.

The first contains thirty-one guild members, three of whom were women. Of these, fifteen paid 8d., one 6d., ten 4d., one 2d., and two a penny; two made no payment. The total income from this source was 14s. 2d., out of a grand total of £52 10s. 10½d. received by the guild that year. No indication is given as to why payments varied, but of the three women, two paid 4d. and the other a penny, which placed them amongst the lower contributors.[67]

The list for the following year contains twenty-one names: eight paid 8d., one 6d., six 4d., four 2d., and two a penny. While membership obviously fell between these two years, that is not the whole story. Fourteen names on the first list, including those of all three women, do not appear on the second. The second list, however, does provide four new names, two of whom paid 2d. and the others a penny each.[68] Thus, although membership fell, even in its last year the guild of Holy Trinity could still attract new members. To return to those who

appeared on both lists: ten paid the same each year, while two paid more and five paid less in the second. No reason is given for these variations, but it is possible that a person's current financial situation was taken into consideration when it came to making this annual payment.

Powerful guilds such as this were not the only ones to survive into the 1540s, however. The percentage of wills which mention guilds remains constant up to the end of Henry's reign. Furthermore, guilds in the parishes of Coggeshall, Fordham, Easthorpe, Wakes Colne and Holy Trinity, Colchester, appear in the pages of the archdeaconry of Colchester's act books from the 1540s as being owed money.[69] This suggests that these bodies had some standing in Church organisation. As the guild of Corpus Christi, Coggeshall, is the only one of these mentioned in the Patent Rolls as possessing property, it is clear that smaller guilds were recognised thus.

In Great Hallingbury it is not clear if the guild of Holy Trinity survived until such bodies were proscribed under Edward VI, or whether it ceased to exist in the early 1540s. The last payment from the guild's collectors to the churchwardens was made in 1540.[70] In 1541 money was received 'for yeld malt', and similar payments had been received in both 1531 and 1538 when the guild clearly existed but when the collectors made no donation.[71] Rent

from stock said to belong to the guild was paid to the church up to 1545 and it was only in 1547 that a cow is described as 'sum tyme longyng to ye Trenite yeld', which seems to indicate that this body no longer existed.[72]

What is certain is that some intercessory institutions were dissolved before any government legislation. The Henrician chantry certificates mention five intercessory institutions which had been dissolved since 4 February 1536 without licence from the king.[73] In 1544 Sir Thomas Darcy was granted the land of the six 'Darcy's Chantries', three of which had been in Danbury and three in Maldon.[74] Alan Kreider says that while such dissolutions were known throughout the history of chantries, instances rose greatly nation-wide after 1536. The reasons for this might have been religious, but the wish for private gain, or the desire not to let such properties fall into the king's hands, must be considered too.[75]

Then, in December 1545, the Henrician Chantries Act was passed. This allowed the crown to confiscate the property of those institutions which had been dissolved privately, without royal sanction, since 4 February 1536. Furthermore, commissioners were empowered to seize any institution which failed to fulfil its founder's intentions. Religious motives for this legislation were secondary to the desire for land, and Henry never intended

to dissolve all intercessory institutions.[76] However, while this Act was being prepared the chaplain of a chantry in the church of Great Bardfield surrendered it and its property to the crown. Given the hostile climate of the time, the action of this priest is understandable; it no doubt seemed to him that the writing was on the wall.[77]

Clearly people could be certain no longer that the system of intercession, founded on the basis of voluntary and mutual reliance, was going to continue. Since the mid-1530s certain intercessory institutions had disappeared, foremost amongst these being the monasteries. There were also doubts as to the continued performance of intercession not yet proscribed. Act books from the archdeaconry of Colchester reveal several cases in the 1540s of people withholding rent intended to keep obits. For example, the churchwardens of White Colne reported John Rakan because he 'Holdythe an obet cowe and wyll pay no proffet to the chyrche'; other cases were reported from Coggeshall, Ramsey, Bardfield, Fairstead, Easthorpe, Bradfield, Debden, Hadstock and Colne Engaine.[78] Furthermore, half a dozen Chancery cases survive from the first half of the sixteenth century which complain that property left to fund intercession had been misappropriated.[79]

Whether the 1540s saw an increased failure to perform intercession cannot be assessed given the records which remain. It is clear, however, that some sought to ensure that provision for the dead continued, even if the person whose duty it was to maintain such intercession failed to perform that task. This is the concern of these cases before the church courts and Chancery. Reports to the church courts were made primarily by churchwardens, while cases before Chancery tended to be disputes over the failure to perform duties requested by a will, and were brought by executors. Thus many of those who were entrusted with the oversight of the system of intercession still sought to maintain it.

Some churchwardens clearly were diligent in the performance of the intercession entrusted to them. Until the death of Henry the churchwardens of Great Hallingbury saw that the taper for John Thurgood was kept burning and the obit for Margaret Champnes maintained.[80] In the accounts for 1541/2 a payment was made for 'Jenkyns Casses durgye', and three sheep were delivered to the churchwardens to fund an obit;[81] this was duly performed in subsequent years. In Great Dunmow from 1541 an obit was kept by the churchwardens for one Bartle.[82] It is likely, too, that the Dunmow churchwardens funded a similar event in the church of Hatfield Peverel. In 1541 they made two payments for an obit there, and in ensuing

years a regular payment was made to the vicar of that parish.[83]

Perhaps because he saw other obits being maintained, in 1546/7 Sir Robert Holnes gave the churchwardens of Great Hallingbury two cows to maintain one for him.[84] He presumably believed both in the need for intercession, and that such intercession would be maintained.

3] 'TRAITORS' VERSUS 'HERETICS'

The religious changes which the breach with Rome brought about, and the issues that these raised, led to conflict and discontent in certain parishes. Some people adopted the new doctrines of Protestantism; indeed, some were prepared to go further than was the crown. Others remained loyal to papal authority. As is shown by the case with which this chapter began, some were prepared to question in public whether the king was right to reject the pope as a usurper.

While obviously there were conflicts within communities prior to the Reformation, from the 1530s there were new issues over which people could disagree. There were also new terms of abuse. In December 1536 a letter, probably addressed to Cromwell, reported that in Colchester there

was evidence of support for the Northern Rebels. The commissioners of Gaol Delivery were having dinner when they were interrupted by Marmaduke Nevell and four others. John Seyncler greeted these men thus: 'Ye be welcum howe doe the traytours in the northe'. Nevell replied 'No traytoures ffor yf ye call us traytoures we wull call you heretykes'.[85]

Several clerics were reported during the 1530s for opposing Reform. In 1531, and again in 1536, Thomas Duke, the vicar of Hornchurch, was informed against. On the first occasion Duke was accused of conspiring with the vicar of Rainham for the latter's servant, disguised as a beggar, to 'com were the kyeng ys gras lyethe and wyt wylfyere baulys [wildfire balls] to thorthro haule abouot ys plaese and to dystry the kyeng or ys consel'.[86] Obviously this earlier charge was not proved, for five years later it was claimed that Duke, still the vicar of Hornchurch, had asserted that the king and his council 'hathe made a way by wyllys & crafftys to pull downe all maner off relygyus', using bribery and false promises.[87] The authorities' response to this second accusation remains unknown.

Pamphlets were an important method of propaganda and were used throughout the 1530s to justify the government's activities.[88] In 1534 Henry Fasted informed Cromwell that

John Wayne, the parson of St James's, Colchester, openly preached against some of these, as had one Doctor Thystell at the Greyfriars in that town the previous Lent. The pamphlets which Wayne objected to were probably the Glass of Truth (1532) and Articles devised by the whole consent of the King's most honourable Council (1533).[89] In the same year that Wayne was reported a monk from Colchester abbey told Cromwell that John Fraunces, the subprior there, had declared after the production of this book of articles that the king and his council 'be all heritikes/ Wheras before he sayth they wer but sysmatykes'.[90]

In 1535 Thomas Corthop, the curate of Harwich, had seventeen articles delivered against him. The charges included: that he disobeyed the king's commandments and prevented them from being declared to the parishioners; that he had left the pope's name in the church's books; that he had prevented a licenced preacher from preaching in Harwich; that he condemned those who adhered to the new doctrines as obscurers of the truth and bringers of division; that he had declared a return to the old ways would soon occur; and that he falsely accused his parishioners of being idolaters when they tried to elect a Lord of Misrule, and had said that they hunted and bowled during service time.[91] Such a curious mixture of offences is worthy of note, for the last two smack more of Puritanism than Catholicism. The failure to remove the

word _pope_ from church books also prompted some men from the parish of Copford to complain about their priest, a Frenchman, in 1539.[92] In this case, it is possible that his nationality alienated this priest from his parishioners.

Marmaduke Nevell was not the only person in Essex who expressed support for the Northern Rebels. In February 1537 the case came to light of the parson of Weeley, Thomas Toone. This priest apparently originated from the North, and just prior to the events which brought him into trouble he had spent about a month in that part of the country. It was reported by one Thomas Rogers that Toone had said: 'Ther shalbe busynes shortly in the north/ and I trust to helpe strengith my my [_sic_] contrymen _with_ x ml [10,000] such as I am my selfe & that I shalbe oon of the woorst of theym all'. Toone opined also that the king would not reign long past Easter.[93]

Thus the government may have had some grounds to fear that religious conservatism would lead to sedition. Furthermore, the government could not totally rely on the South for support. Some in London were clearly sympathetic to the rebels' cause,[94] and when Marmaduke Nevell was asked how the men of the North dared be so bold to rise against their sovereign, he replied:

> we ar playn ffellows & haue showed our myndes ye sothern men thowght as muche as we thowgh you durst not utter your myndes but yf it had cum to batell you wold haue ffawght fayntly.[95]

Of course it is possible that this confidence was misplaced. No insurrection occurred in Essex, nor elsewhere in the South, during these troubled months.

The conservative stance of some of the county's clergy was recognised beyond the borders of Essex. In September 1537 Archbishop Cranmer issued a mandate to the dean of Bocking, whose deanery was a peculiar of the Archbishop of Canterbury. This complained that certain clerics within this deanery had not obeyed the Ten Articles (1536) and maintained abrogated holy days. The dean was told to warn offenders that those who continued to do this risked being deprived if they were beneficed, or proceeded against according to the law if they were not. The dean was also informed that a 'learned council' had recently defined many disputed points in religion and that these would soon be issued in a volume under the Royal authority, no doubt meaning the 'Bishops' Book' (1537). The dean was to warn all the clergy to read a part of this said book from the pulpit each Sunday.[96]

Conservatism, however, was not confined to clerics, as is exemplified by William Smyth, with whom this chapter began. Another lay conservative was John Vigorouse of Langham. In 1534 he was accused of condemning new teachings which spoke against St Mary, as well as saying the king would be prone to change his mind once more over religion, and generally being hostile to those who adhered to the new teachings. Furthermore, he slandered two women in church who were using the English primer, calling them 'errant whores' amongst other things.[97]

In 1539 Richard James of Harwich was reported by four men for speaking in favour of the pope and against the king. He also had a conservative, if rather quirky, view of the fate of the soul. Robert Wynter reported that he had said: 'that the sowle that was departyd shold goo to Sent James or he went to porgatory & matt with the body at the chorche gate'.[98]

The informers in these cases clearly held views which owed much to Reformed doctrines.[99] They were also confident enough to expose their own views on certain disputed issues of religion, though not necessarily by overt declarations of faith. During Henry's reign the position of Protestants was always precarious, and they knew it.[100] Hence the informers always coupled their views to expressions of loyalty to the crown, and

portrayed their opponents as disobeying the king's will. Thomas Corthop was accused of keeping the king's wishes a secret from his subjects, 'to the whiche [i.e. the king's wishes] euery ffaithfull hert is bound by the lawes of god and nature to accomplisshe and fortifye as muche as in hym lyeth'.[101] The beliefs of Henry are not the question here: what is important is that in the 1530s people who adhered to the new doctrines felt they could appeal to him in order to remove those whose beliefs were traditional. During that decade conservatives who opposed the Royal Supremacy were more likely to be hunted down than were heretics.[102]

Similar cases of people being reported for words and actions against the policies of the 1530s appear from all over England.[103] At this time the country was hard to control, and the government sought to enforce the Reformation with a combination of propaganda and policing. In 1534 the first major redefinition of treason since 1352 occurred, and the core of the new legislation asserted it was treason to call the king a heretic, schismatic, tyrant, infidel or usurper, in either words or writing.[104] Thus those who were reported were regarded as being guilty of treason, even though their crime was to support a system of worship which only a few years earlier had been orthodoxy.

Furthermore, people who in the recent past would have kept a low profile were now less fearful of punishment. This is shown in two letters from men of Boxted, both written in 1535. In the first, Jasper Coule wrote to Cromwell after his brother, John, had been arrested as a suspected heretic. Jasper requested that judgement be brought soon, and that in the mean time John's friends might have free access to him.[105] It is unlikely that in earlier times many people would have been so willing to associate themselves openly with one charged with heresy. A couple of years earlier a London heretic feared that his widow would be cast out by the community because of his crime.[106]

In the second letter Richard Jonson complained that he and his wife had been imprisoned by the bishop of London, whose bad treatment of them had forced them to escape. Jonson wanted the freedom to return home and live unmolested.[107] We are not told why Jonson and his wife had been imprisoned, but it is quite possible that they were the same couple as Richard Collyns alias Jonson of Boxted, weaver, and Alice his wife, who were active Lollards in the late 1520s. If this is the case, then they had a long history of heresy, having earlier fled from Salisbury.[108]

In the 1530s some lay people were willing to challenge clerics in religious matters. This may indicate both a greater scriptural knowledge amongst the laity, and a decline in respect for the priesthood. After one sermon by the conservative priest of Langham, John Colyns confronted him and said: 'As semeth me yow spake not this daye syncerely after the gospell'. The offending sermon allegedly included an erroneous rendering of the biblical story of Christ and the ruler's son (John 4:46-54), and the claim that it was lawful for a needy man to enter the house of a rich man who had refused him sustenance and take what was necessary to relieve his hunger.[109] A lack of respect for individual priests is shown by the parson of Tollashunt Knights, who in 1540 brought a case of defamation against Thomas Laurance: he had been called 'Knave prest bawdye prest and dronkan prest'.[110]

Occasionally, informers tried to provoke their conservative opponents into making statements which could be used against them. Henry Fasted recounted the following encounter with John Wayne, the parson of St James's, Colchester:

> your said oratour brought certeyn of thes new bokes to the said parson afore certeyn worshipfull men of the towne of Colchester aforsaid & said Master Parson so yt ys you do openly preche that certeyn bokys which the

king & his counseyll hath admytted be naught here they be I pray you loke ouer theym for peraventure you dyd neuer reade some of theym/ And then he [i.e. Wayne] said hence hence away with theym they be naught I saye.[111]

Thus Fasted stage-managed a confrontation with this priest. He went with props, and made sure that there were local worthies present, no doubt intending them to be influential witnesses when the time came.

Similar provocation occurred in London at this time, and Thomas Corthop was a victim of it in Harwich. When Corthop stated that he would not allow a licenced preacher into his parish, one Morris Harvye said 'prest calle in these words agayne'. This Corthop did, after which he said to Harvye 'nowe go thy way and peache me of treason if thowe wilt'.[112]

The spread of Reformed ideas was certainly helped by the preaching of an apostate friar, Robert Ward. A sermon made in March 1535 provoked the parson of Mistley to report him for heresy. In his defence, Ward sent a copy of the sermon to the authorities.[113] Ward began by saying that as Christ had come and spoken to us there was no excuse for sins to be committed through ignorance. Ministers were exhorted to show the people the Word,

devoid of all fable and false tradition: people were told they should believe the Word not because it was taught by priests, but as it was the living truth of God.

The Church should be cleansed of ignorance concerning ceremonies: for example, holy water was a 'remembrance', and to teach it washed away venial sin was to detract from the sacrifice of Christ, whose blood was shed to wash away all sin, both venial and mortal. The clergy should declare the true nature and significance of the sacraments clearly and in English. He wished that clerics were as good at administering the sacraments as they were at serving citations, suspensions and excommunications.

Finally, Ward desired reform of the sacrament of penance. People should no longer be taught that forgiveness and the remission of sin was gained by the absolution of a priest or the satisfaction enjoined by him. Such beliefs maintained the popish kingdom. By way of absolution the priest should show the sinner the enormity of his error and that it was contrary to God's commandment. Man should be made to despair at his sin, before being lifted up to God's promise and the favour of Christ's blood. This act was done in faith and would take effect for the sake of Christ's blood. Acts done by way of satisfaction led man to forget the promise of favour obtained by Christ, thus they were superstitious and

detracted from Christ's sacrifice. Good deeds should be performed not by way of satisfaction, but as laud and praise of God. Christ was the sole saviour.

Thus some in Essex were able to hear preaching of the new doctrines. Furthermore, it is clear that some took notice of these teachings, while others violently rejected them. One of the complaints against John Vigorouse concerned a dispute over a sermon by Ward. At Whitsun Ward had preached that man should put his trust for the health of his soul in God and Christ, and not in St Mary or anybody else. When asked by some parishioners whether such preaching was good, Langham's parish priest replied that it contained newfangledness and that men should beware. Vigorouse was not so restrained, saying: 'What say yow in Wardes behalfe/ Is not he a knave whiche denyed our lady to haue power'.[114]

Thomas Corthop, too, spoke against the preachers of new doctrines. This conservative curate obviously felt threatened by such preachers for he feared they attracted adherents from true - that is traditional - beliefs. For example, one day Corthop preached 'that the people nowe a dayes wuld not regard nor beleve the saynges of the Captaynes of the Churche but when a newe ffangelled ffelowe doth com and showe them a newe story hym they do beleve'. Such new teachings, however, had dire

consequences for society: 'Alle this devysyon comyth thrugh that ffalse knave that heretike Doctor Barns and suche other heretikes as he ys'.[115]

The desire for unity was strong. Indeed, acquiescence to the Reformation with so little opposition may have occurred simply because most people were primarily concerned with the wish to avoid conflict. Hence it was a powerful argument against a set of opinions if those who adhered to them were shown to be the cause of disunity. Such a charge, however, was made not only by conservatives against Reformers. In some people's opinion obstinate Catholics caused division because they refused to recognise the truth of the Word which the Reformers had revealed. For example, John Vigorouse was accused of wanting the formation of two parties, one for the old order and the other for the new, because he believed the old order would attract more adherents. For this, he was seen as wishing to promote divisions where they had not previously been.[116]

In some cases the cause of division within a parish may not have been religious, or not totally so, even if some tried to portray the conflict as such. The last two articles against Thomas Corthop, which cited his opposition to the election of a Lord of Misrule and his accusation, denied by the parishioners, that many of the

town's worthies hunted and bowled during service time, do not represent any threat to the crown or its religious position. Rather, this curate was clearly socially as well as doctrinally at odds with some of his Harwich parishioners.[117] It is likely that this secular conflict made those who reported his religious conservatism more willing to do so, as it certainly would not have enhanced his popularity.

The possibility that those who were reported were generally unpopular is something that needs to be borne in mind, even if it is hard to prove. John Vigorouse of Langham, as portrayed in the articles against him - an admittedly hostile source - does not appear a character likely to have endeared himself to his fellow parishioners. But this source makes it clear that the parish priest was a conservative too. No complaints, however, were directed against him. Furthermore, the problem of false accusations was recognised at the time, and Cromwell was careful to weed out complaints which were made primarily through malice.[118]

A clear example of the use of a false accusation to try to get rid of an unpopular cleric is shown in the case brought by the parishioners of Halstead in 1545 against their vicar, Thomas Gale. He was accused of neglecting his duty by failing to read the Ten Commandments,

Paternoster. Twelve Articles and the king's injunctions at the appointed times, as well as making a sinister interpretation of the Scripture in a sermon on spiritual obligations. The reply of the Privy Council makes it clear that this was not a doctrinal conflict, however, but a tithe dispute. The vicar was told to be more diligent in future and not to insist that the tithe was paid before he performed his clerical duties. As for the parishioners, while any just complaint from them would be gladly received, they were told 'to beware they hereafter shuld apon no evill will nor malice put their saide vicaire in sute'.[119]

This case came from the 1540s, whereas those cited previously originated in the 1530s. By the latter decade the government's policy on religious matters had taken a generally conservative turn, with the notable exception of teaching on Purgatory. In the 1540s Protestants had most to fear, even if it now seems that only the most extreme heretics were hunted down.[120] What with the Act of Six Articles, the fall of Cromwell, and the Howard marriage, in 1540 the prospects of future support by the government for the evangelical cause appeared very bleak.[121]

Nationally, accusations of treason peaked in 1537, and it has been asserted that by then the government had largely overcome resistance to its policies.[122] Indeed,

Essex yielded no complaints against conservatives after 1539. Furthermore, a draft proclamation was prepared in April 1539 which addressed the issue of divisions in the country over religion. This reveals an alteration in the government's priorities. To defuse the situation, it was declared that:

> no person or persons shall henceforth slanderously and maliciously name or call any other papist nor heretic, unless the person or persons so using themselves can and do lawfully and justly prove the same to be true.[123]

Thus by the end of the 1530s the government apparently considered religious division to be a greater threat than conservatism, so informers were no longer encouraged.[124]

That Reformers were prone to be attacked in the final years of Henry's reign is shown in 1544 by the humiliating recantation of Robert Ward of Thaxted. Ward confessed to being a man of small experience and no learning who had taken it upon himself to expound the Scripture in alehouses and other places, chiefly when overcome by alcohol. In so doing, he admitted to having caused some of his listeners to fall into error. As he also kept some unlawful books, however, it seems he was not as unlearned as he purported.[125]

The most feared heresies were those concerned with the eucharist.[126] In 1546 several cases of offences against the sacrament of the altar were reported in England, and it has been suggested that the conservative faction at court launched a concerted attack against heretics at this time as they realised Henry was nearing death. They aimed to exploit the king's horror of heresy in order to bring down Edward Seymour, and so secure for the conservatives the upper hand in the forthcoming minority.[127]

In May five people appeared before the commission of the Six Articles sitting at Brentwood. All denied transubstantiation. The Privy Council ordered that a stay of execution should apply to two of the five because they had appeared repentant to the commissioners. The others remained steadfast: indeed, it was recorded that the only woman, Joan Bette, 'was moche perplexed to suffree sayeng that her flaessh woolde not burne being untruylie condempned'. The reward for such confidence was death, the Privy Council ordering that they be executed 'at Colchester and two other places within that Countie moste mete for thexample and terrour of others'.[128]

The commissioners feared that others in Essex held similar views to those of the condemned, but the Privy Council ordered the assembly to disband 'unles they shuld see apparent infection of a grete nombre there fallen into

the like errours'. Although no large-scale discovery of such sacramentarians is recorded, a month after the Brentwood deliberations John Hadlam and two others were sent before the Privy Council by Mr Lucas of Colchester, 'detected of evill opinions against the Blessed Sacrament of thaltare'.[129] Hadlam stood by his opinions and seems to have been burned at Smithfield, along with Anne Askew and others, in July 1546.[130]

4] THE GENERAL EFFECT IN ESSEX OF THE BREAK WITH ROME

By 1547 some Essex men and women were totally committed to a set of religious beliefs, whether Reformed or conservative. However, the instances of strong doctrinal loyalties cited above were not typical: such cases come from less than a dozen of Essex's four hundred or so parishes. Some conflicts may not have come to the attention of the authorities, of course, but the most likely reaction to events after 1530 was confusion or acquiescence, not division.[131]

Government policy was at times vague and appeared to be prone to change. It was also inconsistent, as the doctrinal path followed was neither firmly of the old nor the new order. For example, the sacrament of the altar retained a traditional interpretation, but Purgatory was

disavowed. There were further grounds for confusion in respect of Purgatory too. This doctrine was omitted from the teachings of the English Church in 1543, but after that time intercessory institutions, such as guilds and obits, continued, and the legal system was used to ensure this was the case.

It was argued in the last chapter that most people were generally happy with the pre-Reformation Church. In the 1540s many still expressed a desire for the traditional, familiar ways to continue. A large percentage of wills sought the security of intercession. Furthermore, many cases came before the church courts which sought to uphold the traditional order of things. People acquiesced to the changes, they seldom initiated them.

The people of Essex wished to preserve peace and unity, and appear loyal to their king. In general, it was those who caused dissension within the community who were reported to outside authorities. Expressions of religious beliefs did change, but for the majority this was probably because of the uncertain situation rather than conversion to Reformed ideas. In 1534 John Vigorouse had claimed that if 2,000 took the side of Reform, 5,000 would take the side of traditional Catholicism.[132] How accurate this assessment was, and how far it might have altered by January 1547, cannot be told. Such a point is important.

The majority wished to avoid making an overt declaration of faith; indeed, most were unlikely to have had a clearly defined doctrinal stand-point. Such vagueness in matters of religion allowed the majority to accommodate themselves to the changes brought about by the Henrician Reformation, and it would allow them to do so during the next two decades of religious change as well.

CHAPTER THREE

THE REFORMATION DURING THE REIGN OF EDWARD

1] INTRODUCTION

Under Henry VIII the power of the pope had been cast aside, and by January 1547 some of the old order had been removed, while much of what remained did not appear safe. The religious houses had gone; chantries, colleges, guilds and hospitals were under attack; the wealth of the parishes seemed to be there for the taking. However, the Henrician government had not promoted a Protestant Reformation in England. In contrast, during the reign of Edward the direction of official policy was much clearer, so that by the end of 1552 'Officially...England was now a Protestant country, observing a much changed faith, constrained to uniformity of a revolutionary kind'.[1]

In July 1547 Cromwell's injunctions were reissued with additions, which included the requirement that each church acquired a copy of Erasmus's Paraphrases and the Book of Homilies. This latter work contained some Protestant doctrines.[2] At the end of that year Parliament passed the Chantries Act, which abolished all intercessory institutions on religious grounds.[3] Furthermore, the Act of Six Articles was repealed, as were the Lancastrian Heresy Laws. An act was passed against speaking

irreverently against the sacrament of the altar, and communion was ordered to be taken in both kinds.[4] By the end of March 1548 the Privy Council had abolished certain ceremonies, such as candles at Candlemas, creeping to the cross on Good Friday, and the use of holy bread and holy water; furthermore, all images, and not just 'abused' ones, were to be removed from churches. In addition, a brief pamphlet, the Order of Communion, was issued by royal proclamation, and it was used at Easter that year. This inserted English prayers of preparation for communion into the Latin mass, and so helped to prepare the way for an English Prayer Book.[5]

In March 1549 the first Edwardian Prayer Book received the royal assent and was the sole legal form of worship from Whit Sunday that year. While it was ambiguously phrased, and did not specifically deny Catholic doctrine, it was intended to allow Protestants to worship with a clear conscience.[6] Already, in February 1549, the parish clergy had received sanction to marry.[7] The position of the clergy was further altered in March 1550 when the new ordinal emphasised a role as a preacher.[8] In the Spring of 1550 Nicholas Ridley, the bishop of London, ordered that all altars in his diocese were to be replaced by communion tables, while full Protestant worship was established by the second Edwardian Prayer Book, which was to be used from 1 November 1552.[9] The government required

various inventories of church goods throughout Edward's reign, and in the Autumn of 1552 commissioners were dispatched to the counties once again to discover what church goods remained. However, this time they left the incumbent the minimum of a chalice and some vestments, and confiscated the rest.[10]

This was the framework of the Edwardian Reformation. However, certain questions need to be addressed. To what extent were these policies applied in the parishes? Did such policies meet opposition or non-cooperation? How great an effect did the establishment of Protestant worship have on the beliefs and practices of the people?

In neither Essex nor elsewhere in the country was there an immediate shift away from traditional religious practices the moment that the Henrician regime ended.[11] In Great Hallingbury money was collected both for the Easter sepulchre light in 1547 and the 'waxsilver' for that year. The sepulchre light was duly made, together with tapers which burned round the sepulchre that were paid for by the bachelors of the parish. Furthermore, a 'common light' was made, while nails were bought 'aswell to ye rode loft as other reparacons'.[12]

Great Hallingbury was not alone in at first maintaining some of its traditional practices. In Great Dunmow silver

games were held in 1547, which will be examined in Chapter Six. Here it is sufficient to say that this event was more akin to the church-organised festivities of the Henrician era than to anything that followed. Payments were made for watching the sepulchre at Easter 1547, while that same year ringing on All Souls day was funded. The following year the church bells were rung on 'all seyntes day at nyght'.[13] This ringing was for the repose of souls in Purgatory, and so was contrary to the government's religious policy; indeed, such peals appear to have ceased nationally by the late-1540s, and they do not appear again under Edward in Great Dunmow after 1548.[14]

Many other traditional payments soon finished, as well. In Great Hallingbury the churchwardens gave no money to the beastwarden after the death of Henry. This money had previously been used to maintain a light to bring blessing upon the church's stock. Other changes in Great Hallingbury involved alterations to that church's decor. Three entries after those for the repairs of the roodloft there is a payment of 7s. 8d. 'for whit lymmyng ye church'; before the year was out a poor box had been provided, and the Bible had been carried to London and back 'to sett in certen gospels which lackyd'.[15]

The annual payment to the church by the beastwarden was suspended, with four years annuity being paid via Lord

Morley on 21 March 1551.[16] After that, no further mention of this office is to be found. It is possible that the confusion over the payment from the beastwardens reflects a general unease over the fate of all church property, some of which was already threatened, for the passing of the Edwardian Chantries Act at the end of 1547 meant that land which had long been administered by parishes was soon to be confiscated by the crown.

2] THE EDWARDIAN CHANTRIES ACT

Even before the Chantries Act was passed, the intercessory institutions which it proscribed were under attack. They had not been secure in the last years of Henry's reign, and the Book of Homilies, published in July 1547, denounced Purgatory and condemned the system of observances which had grown up around it.[17] Thus it is hardly surprising that some parts of the intercessory system were ceasing to function prior to this Act. From 1547 the churchwardens of Great Hallingbury no longer made payments for obits or for John Thurgood's taper. Similarly, in that year the churchwardens of Great Dunmow did not fund the obits which had previously been their responsibility. That such small intercessory institutions as these were officially ended by the 1547 Chantries Act,

however, was the main contrast between it and the Henrician Chantries Act of two years earlier.

The preamble of the 1545 Chantries Act justified the legislation in three ways. The government's need for money was paramount; however, the need to deal with the growing number of private dissolutions without royal sanction was cited, while it was claimed that some institutions were not run as their founder's had intended. The institutions covered by this act were those with fairly substantial endowments: chantries, guilds, colleges, free chapels and hospitals. Most contributed First Fruits and Tenths, and it was never intended that all such institutions would be dissolved.[18]

In contrast, the rationale for the Edwardian legislation was religious. The act's preamble declared:

> a great part of superstition and errors in christian religion hath been brought into the minds and estimations of Men, by reason of the ignorance of their very true and perfect salvation through the death of Jesus Christ, and by devising and phantasyng vain opinions of purgatory and masses satisfactory, to be done for them which be departed; the which doctrine and vain opinion, by nothing more is maintained and upholden, than by the abuse of trentals, chantries, and

other provisions made for the continuance of the said blindness and ignorance.

Hospitals were no longer included, but all lands and rents which had supported anniversaries, obits, lamps and lights were, along with the other institutions mentioned in the earlier act. Furthermore, the crown gained all such property unconditionally at Easter 1548.[19] The desire for land and the government's need for money was as acute for Edward's government as it had been for that of Henry, and this was undoubtedly the main motive behind the 1547 act. However, the Edwardian Chantries Act was portrayed as a reform measure, with the money accrued to be used for education and charity; no such claim was made for its Henrician predecessor.

Commissioners were dispatched to discover what lands were due to the crown under the terms of this act; in February 1548 ten Essex gentlemen were commissioned to produce such a survey for that county.[20] The commissioners went to certain centres within the county and churchwardens or other parish officials of the surrounding area reported to them. Thus the churchwardens of Great Dunmow recorded costs of 2s. 8d. for appearing before the commissioners at Braintree.[21]

There is no return in the Edwardian chantry certificates for Great Dunmow, which indicates that the churchwardens reported that there was no land in their parish eligible for confiscation. That, however, was not true. During the reign of Elizabeth land in Great Dunmow which had funded obits and kindred institutions was granted by the crown.[22] Thus the churchwardens of Great Dunmow tried to conceal property which should have become the crown's. This case, however, is only one example of a nation-wide practice, and after 1558 the search for such properties became big business.[23]

Concealment appeared in various forms. Some parishes, such as Great Dunmow, simply failed to inform the commissioners of any property in their parish which supported intercessory institutions. The Calendar of Patent Rolls from between 1547 and 1582, the date to which current volumes go, reveals that property in 237 Essex parishes which came into the crown's hands because of the 1547 Chantries Act was subsequently re-granted. Of these, sixty-seven parishes appear in neither the Henrician nor the Edwardian chantry certificates. They had presumably concealed all such property.

While the total failure to admit to property that had a religious use suggests deliberate concealment, in other cases it is possible that a genuine mistake or oversight

was made. This could easily happen, for example, where property in one parish supported a religious institution in another. Thus the Edwardian chantry certificates contain extensive returns from both Chelmsford and Writtle. However, neither parish reported the land in Writtle which maintained bells over the altar in Chelmsford church. It is quite possible that this was not concealed deliberately.[24]

Other parishes admitted to containing only part of the property liable for confiscation, and this was not discovered until later. In some cases, when the concealed property in question was of little value, such concealment may again have been merely a genuine error. For example, the parishes of All Saints and St Mary's, both in Maldon, reported to the commissioners that each contained a guild with property, yet St Mary's failed to mention land given to support an anniversary, while All Saints was later found to contain property given to support a lamp.[25] However, parishes seem to have been less likely to conceal property from private foundations than from more communal institutions. This can be seen when the concealment of chantry, chapel and guild property is examined.

The chantry certificates from both 1545 and 1547 contain a total of fifty-one chantries in Essex. In the years after 1547 the properties of forty-four Essex

chantries were granted by the crown, of which three do not appear in the chantry certificates. However, it is possible that one of these three, St John the Evangelist, Chelmsford, was recorded as a guild in the Edwardian chantry certificates.[26] The other two chantries not found in the certificates were in Danbury. In January 1544 the property of three dissolved chantries in Danbury was granted to Sir Thomas Darcy. Hence it is possible that some land of those chantries was also granted after 1547, and that no others were concealed in that parish.[27]

There is greater evidence of concealment where chapels were concerned. The surveys of Essex made in 1545 and 1547 recorded twenty-three chapels. However, no less than thirty-one chapels were granted to laymen between 1547 and 1582, of which only twelve appear in the Henrician and/or Edwardian chantry certificates. Thus there were nineteen chapels whose property was granted but which did not appear in either of the above surveys. Of these, only six were in parishes which did not appear at all in the chantry certificates. Therefore thirteen parishes which reported to one or both of the chantry commissions of the 1540s failed to mention a chapel as they should have done.

Guild property, however, seems to have been the most likely to be concealed. Only twenty-two Essex guilds were recorded as possessing property amongst the chantry

certificates; of these, five do not appear in the Calendar of Patent Rolls as having had their property subsequently re-granted. Yet by 1582 the property of at least seventy-two guilds had been granted. Thus the property of fifty-five guilds, not declared to the chantry commissioners, was later granted. Those fifty-five guilds came from fifty-one parishes, of which fourteen are not mentioned in the chantry certificates. Therefore, thirty-seven parishes were later discovered to have concealed guild property when they made their returns to the commissioners.

It is risky to draw firm conclusions from the above analysis. The identification of concealed lands depends on these having been discovered at a later date. Furthermore, to be identified now the land then needs to have been granted, with the grant stating the former use of the property and it appearing in the Calendar of Patent Rolls. However, it seems that there was a clear pattern with regard to concealment. Parish officials were willing to report private foundations, such as chantries, to the commissioners. Those same officials, however, often sought to conceal the property of communal foundations, such as guilds, or of foundations which provided the community with a service, such as chapels. Foundations such as these would have been the subject of communal investment down the years, as well as providing a service.

It is hardly surprising that many parishes tried to retain such properties.

Some guild property was certainly used by parishes once the guild had gone. A commission sent to Essex in 1548 to inquire into the sale of church goods discovered that the churchwardens of Coggeshall had acquired the money and former possessions of the guild of Corpus Christi in that parish.[28] Similarly, the church of St Osyth's declared that it had the goods of the former Trinity guild when that parish made its inventory of church goods in the Autumn of 1552.[29] The 1552 inventories also revealed that in Great Bardfield the church sold a pyx and a pair of censers for £8 9s., which was used to buy the guild hall for the parish. That property was turned into an almshouse, and was being used as such when the inventory was made.[30]

Not all the property which came into the crown's hands by way of the 1547 act was granted to individuals for their own personal use. In Saffron Walden the guild of Holy Trinity had remained a powerful influence throughout the final years of Henry's reign, administering, amongst other things, the weekly market, two annual fairs, and the town's grammar school. All this was threatened by the Chantries Act, so the town petitioned the crown for a new corporation, as did several other English towns which had

been deprived of guilds that had provided de facto corporate identity.[31] Saffron Walden's new corporation was granted in February 1549, and it took over most of the secular functions of the former guild, even to the extent of continuing the corporation's accounts in the same book as the guild accounts had been kept. Furthermore, the names of the first treasurer and one of the two chamberlains of the new corporation appear in the last membership list of the guild.[32]

Some chantry and guild priests had been expected to teach, and the chantry commissioners reported in 1548 that the duties of eighteen Essex priests included this task. The preamble to the 1547 act declared that all charitable and educational functions of the dissolved institutions would continue, but in Essex this seems to have been seldom the case. For example, the property of a chantry in Rayleigh, whose priest taught, was granted away by the crown in 1549 without provision for the continuation of its educational functions.[33] In total, all but four of the schools which had been maintained by chantry or guild priests before 1548 certainly disappeared: the possible exceptions were at Braintree, Coggeshall, Maldon and Walthamstow.[34] There is no indication of the size or quality of the establishments which were lost, but it seems that Essex fared worse than elsewhere in England,

for the general consensus of opinion now is that many schools survived the Edwardian dissolutions.[35]

The history of education in Essex during Edward's reign was not only one of curtailment. Some schools were not attached to intercessory institutions and so they were unaffected by the Chantries Act, while grammar schools in both Colchester and Saffron Walden, which had received royal charters under Henry VIII, continued under Edward and beyond.[36] In 1551 the crown received a petition for a grammar school to be established in Chelmsford, and that was done. It was endowed with the property of Hilles Chantry in Great Baddow, a chantry in East Tilbury, and lands formerly of St Mary's guild in Ulting, none of which had formerly had an educational element.[37] However, as happened nationally with many Edwardian foundations, the pressure in this case came from below, aided by the support of a local magnate; furthermore, two chantry-run schools in Chelmsford did not survive the dissolution of the chantries.[38]

It is clear that the 1547 Chantries Act had a profound effect upon the parishes of Essex. However, the most noticeable result of this act at the time would not have been the transfer of land ownership or the concealment of certain lands within the parish. Rather, the effect on worship within the churches of Essex would have been the

greatest change. Guilds ceased to function, removing not only an important and popular expression of religious piety from the parish, but a part of its social life too. Services for the dead ended, and with them the security of knowing help would be forthcoming beyond the grave. Certain lights and lamps within the churches shone no more. All this cessation of activity must have left its mark on men's minds, especially coming, as it did, after a decade and a half of change. The old order had received yet another blow, and things which had long been the subjects of investment by the laity had been proscribed. All this destruction can only have greatly reduced the laity's willingness to invest in the Church.

3] CHANGES IN THE PARISH CHURCH

The ceremonies and institutions that were ended by the Chantries Act were only one aspect of the alterations which occurred in the parish churches of England as the Edwardian regime sought to establish Protestant forms of worship. These changes came in two forms. On the one hand there was destruction of both the old order's decor and its religious practices. At the same time there was the attempt to institute Protestant alternatives. The changes which did occur can be traced through several sources, such as churchwardens' accounts, a survey of 1548

which sought to establish what church goods had been sold by that date, and the inventories of church goods compiled in late 1552.[39]

Edwardian churchwardens' accounts, together with those from the Marian era which recorded what had to be restored, make it clear that the churches of Essex changed greatly in their appearance between 1547 and 1551 - few alterations to the decor occurred during the last eighteen months of the reign. For example, in Great Dunmow, by May 1551, 12s. was spent on a communion table, and a total of 3s. 11d. was paid for two men 'for takyng downe ye Alters & caryeng aweye the rubrysh'. The church was whitewashed and the rood pulled down. Furthermore, an alms box was provided in accordance with the 1547 injunctions.[40]

In Great Hallingbury some early Edwardian changes to the church's decor have already been noted in Section One. After those, between March 1549 and March 1551 a communion table was bought, while 5s. 4d. was paid 'for bettynge [beating] downe the auters & takyng downe the particon in ye chuncell'. Later, money was spent on 'mendynge the fants where ye auters stoud'.[41] The removal of altars from the churches of Essex and their replacement by communion tables sometimes occurred before the government's order of November 1550 for this to be done nationally. The reason was that in April that year

Nicholas Ridley, the recently appointed bishop of London, started a campaign to remove all altars throughout his diocese, which included the whole of Essex. Ronald Hutton has found that by the end of 1550 the bishop's aim had been achieved.[42] Thus external pressures on the parish, and ones not necessarily officially sanctioned by the highest authority in the land, prompted certain actions to be taken.

Harwich's churchwardens' accounts begin at the end of September 1550 and mention no alterations to the church there. However, payments made in the next reign make it clear that such changes occurred. Marian restorations of church decor are to be found also in Heybridge, Broomfield and, to a lesser extent, in Chelmsford and Braintree too.[43] One widespread alteration to Essex churches was the removal of the rood. This is recorded only in the churchwardens' accounts of Great Dunmow,[44] but during the reign of Mary roods needed to be reerected in Broomfield, Great Hallingbury and Heybridge; work was also done on the one in Harwich.

Evidence of the alteration of church decor is to be found not only in extant churchwardens' accounts, however. Early in 1548 the Privy Council ordered the removal of all images which remained in any church or chapel.[45] That such destruction began during that year is recorded in a

survey of 1548 to discover what church goods had been sold. For example, the images that had stood in Hazeleigh church were sold for 20d. and the money given to the poor; those images sold by Great Sampford raised 14d..[46] More often, money was recorded as having been spent on making the alterations, rather than it having been made from the sale of what was removed. Hence Chelmsford spent the money received for old metal and towels on whitewashing the church, removing images and writing 'scriptures' upon the walls.[47]

Alterations to church decor is further described in some of the church inventories produced in 1552. Numerous parishes record payments made for glazing their church's windows; the inventory from Aldham stated that this was for the 'dysffasyng off ye Immeg's in the same glass'.[48] The removal of altars is mentioned in several parishes, such as Hockley and Rainham,[49] while many churches, including Latchingdon and Widdington, reported that former images had been replaced by scriptural texts written on the walls of the church, a practice which was common in London too.[50] In both St Mary's, Maldon, and in Burnham the church walls were regaled with the royal coat of arms.[51] A similar story of organised iconoclasm paid for by parish officers is apparent throughout Edwardian England, and by the end of 1548 most churches had been purged of their images.[52]

Parallel to these alterations to the fabric of parish churches was the attempt to establish Protestant worship. At various times during the reign of Edward orders were issued for parishes to buy certain books. In Great Hallingbury a Book of Homilies was bought in 1548. By May 1551 the church of Great Dunmow could boast having Erasmus's Paraphrases, a communion book and three psalters. In November 1552 Harwich's churchwardens paid 4s. 2d. 'for ye newe saruys bouke', which is the only Essex reference in churchwardens' accounts to the second Edwardian Prayer Book. It was not until 1553 that Broomfield bought a copy of the Paraphrases, along with 'ij halfe portasis of a great volem & serten homilis'.[53] In 1552 twenty-four Essex parishes stated that money received for the sale of church goods had been spent on books required for Protestant worship and the most common purchases were Prayer Books and copies of the Paraphrases. How effective the provision of books was in converting the population, however, remains unclear.

The sale of church goods was an important source of parish income during the late 1540s and early 1550s, and such sales are extensively recorded in churchwardens' accounts. For example, the churchwardens of Great Hallingbury recorded that between March 1549 and March 1551 cloths, vestments and such-like went, as did 'ye old cherch boks which was set forth in latton', for 3s. 4d. to

a man from Suffolk. Latten and brass was sold as well, together with 'ye tabernackle which was over the highe auter' and 'ye frame of ye sepulchr with other old stuffe abought ye particon in ye chuncell'. In total, £2 15s. 5d. was received from these sales.[54]

Sales of similar items are to be found in all the churchwardens' accounts left from this reign. In 1549 the chapel bells in Braintree were sold for 10s.. In Great Dunmow latten, church plate, linen and a book were all sold, along with 'the tabyrnakyll of our ladye petye', on which the church had spent money less than twenty years before. The Harwich accounts record sales from between 1550 and 1553, the majority occurring in the year following October 1550. Once again it was plate, vestments and such-like that dominated. Of interest is the sale to Richard Koupper, dated 22 December 1550, for 5s. of the altar stone 'for to make a graue stone to laye on hys fathars graue'; was this pragmatism, or an attempt to ensure the safe-keeping of the altar stone until it was returned to its rightful place? What is clear is that by this date an altar had been removed.[55]

Such sales were not in accordance with royal intentions, and it was allegedly for that reason that various commissions were dispatched to enquire into this practice; the profits from the sales of Church property

were wanted to fill the coffers of the Treasury and not those of the parish churches. Thus the government ordered both the survey of 1548 and the church inventories of 1552 to be made. That these commissions were not merely a rubber stamp is shown by the experience of the Harwich churchwardens. On 12 September 1552 the parish sent a representative 'to Thorpe at ye comandment of ye Kyngs magystes comyschenars yar settynge apon owr churche goods'. On the 24th an inventory of church goods was made and was taken to the 'justes' at Great Bentley; however, 'it wowld nat be taken'. So it had to be rewritten on 1 October and once more be presented to the commissioners.[56]

The churchwardens of East Ham provided the 1552 commissioners with a very detailed account of the changes which had occurred in their parish between the accession of Edward VI and the time at which the inventory was presented, which was 4 October 1552. In the first year of Edward's reign the church's images were sold, and the money was put towards both repairing the church and altering its decor. The next year the church was robbed; the poor box was broken open, and 'the best copes and vestements and all other thyngs worth the conveying away' were stolen. In the third year the Book of Common Prayer was provided. Nothing had been sold in either the second or third years of Edward's reign, but in the fourth year the churchwardens and parishioners agreed 'to sell such

things as remayned superfluous and unoccupied'. Items which went included redundant church plate, vestments, banners and linen. The following year a communion table was provided, while in the sixth year of Edward's reign the poor box was once again robbed.[57]

The story of East Ham was a common one. Therefore a look at this case will help us to understand the reasons for the fate of church goods during this period. On one level, there certainly was some opportunism at a time of confusion. East Ham church was robbed twice in six years, and it was not the only one to suffer such a fate during this period; eighteen of the 168 extant inventories of 1552 mention that the church had been robbed since 1547. With church goods in circulation as a result of sales, stolen church property was unlikely to have raised the suspicion which it might have done once. Furthermore, there is evidence of individuals taking into their custody certain items. For example, Sir William Stafford forcibly removed bells from the churches of Rochford, Ashingdon, South Shoebury, Hawkwell and Foulness, although it is unknown whether he intended to sell them, or wished to prevent them from being confiscated by the crown.[58]

However, it is wrong to regard all sales of church property as embezzlement, for most parishes only sold items which were no longer required. The church services

of the Protestant faith did not employ the plethora of vestments and other equipment, such as pyxes and censers, which those of the Church of Rome did. The abolition of many ceremonies and processions made various other items redundant, such as crosses, banners and streamers. Furthermore, many of the items that were sold had been officially proscribed by the government. Both images and altars, for example, had had to be removed from churches by the time the church inventories were presented to the commissioners. As the inventory of East Ham states, it was things that were 'superfluous and unoccupied' which were sold.

As has been shown above, churches altered greatly in their appearance during Edward's reign. Such alterations had to be funded - the destruction of Catholic decor in Edwardian Essex being performed, not by people filled with iconoclastic zeal, but by paid workmen. Furthermore, books, communion tables, and other items necessary for Protestant worship had to be bought. Thus the parishes at this time were faced by additional expenses, while the very changes which caused them seem to have made people less willing to give to the Church.[59]

It had long been the established practice for a parish church to sell some goods in times of financial need; for example, Great Dunmow had done that in the mid-1530s.

Thus it is not surprising that items which no longer served any purpose in the religious life of a parish were sold to fund the required changes. Indeed, the government recognised that in certain circumstances such a practice was acceptable. In August 1551 the Privy Council wrote to the bishop of London informing him that the church of Fobbing would be allowed to sell up to £30 worth of its goods in order to fund necessary repairs as it was 'in great ruyne and decaye'.[60] The government's opposition to the sale of church goods was not a matter of principle, but sprang from the fact that they were often unsanctioned and deprived the crown of a possible source of income.

Some of the money raised by the sale of church goods was not used by the church itself, but for the benefit of the parish in general. For example, the 1548 inquiry into the sale of church goods was told that 12s. raised by such sales in Rochford had been given to the poor, while the money forthcoming from the sale of Leigh's church plate had been used in part to pay the ransom of some parishioners taken prisoner in France. In Newport the money raised from sales was used to help poor folk and to pay the king's taxes, while Great Bently employed their income from this source by repairing roads and bridges, as well as on the poor and on church repairs. All this was essential parish expenditure.[61]

Since property which was being sold had no doubt been acquired by the parishes concerned over many years, mostly paid for by generations of devout parishioners, it is not surprising that parish officials considered it justifiable to use such items for the benefit of their parish. As the alternative was that such goods would be confiscated by the government and disappear to London, a parish might understandably have tried to utilise such items for its own benefit first. Holders of parish office in 1552 would have lived through the dissolution of the monasteries, chantries, guilds and other institutions of the medieval Church, and seen the confiscation of the property of such institutions by the crown. Thus such officials would have recognised the threat to parish property. They had the opportunity to sell some of that property and use the profits for the benefit of the parish. It was an opportunity which was often taken.

In addition to the other changes which occurred between 1547 and 1553 a new figure appeared in many parishes: the priest's wife. The clergy received the sanction to marry in February 1549. In July 1553 there were 319 priests in Essex who were certainly beneficed, holding a total of 353 livings. Of these, eighty-eight were deprived under Mary for being married, a proportion which was less than in London and comparable with Norfolk and Suffolk, but which was greater than in Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire,

Lancashire and the diocese of York.[62] While nothing is known of these women or how they were received by the community, it is unlikely that they stirred no emotions.

4] THE RELIGION OF THE PEOPLE

The changes which occurred in the parishes of Essex during the reign of Edward were clear to see. The whole appearance of the churches altered, while services changed both in their form and the language used. Furthermore, many well established expressions of popular religion came under attack, foremost amongst these being the provision for the souls of the departed. Hence it is not surprising that changes occurred in the way in which the laity responded both to the Church and to religion itself.

The main source by which such changes can be ascertained are the wills which survive from the Edwardian period. Care, however, must be taken when such documents are used. For example, wills were written mainly by the more well off. Thus they reflect trends within only a section of the community, rather than in society as a whole. Furthermore, they were written as death approached, and so tended to reflect the views of the community's older elements.

A will's content was conditioned further by other considerations. On the one hand, a testator could not invest in things which had been prohibited. For example, the Chantries Act of 1547 attacked intercessory institutions, so the end of bequests to such foundations does not simply indicate a decline in belief in Purgatory. Furthermore, the prime function of a will was the legal transfer of property and wealth, so a testator would not want to risk compromising that role. Edmund Talbot, a priest from Cranham, left two wills, the first dated 26 March 1550 and the second dated the following day. The contents of these two wills remained the same, but the style altered. In the first, a traditional preamble was used, with the soul being dedicated to God, St Mary and all the saints; in the second, the reference to the Virgin was absent. Similarly, while in the earlier will the residue of the testator's goods was to be used for the benefit of his soul, no such formula appears in the later one.[63]

Trends are discernible in the 277 wills from the reign of Edward which have been examined.[64] First, the style of preamble showed a marked shift, and Edmund Talbot was clearly not the only testator to be wary of using a traditional one. Whereas in the last three years of Henry's reign sixty percent of wills began in that way, under Edward the figure dropped to twenty-one percent

between 1547 and 1549, and to only eleven percent between 1550 and the king's death. It was shown in the last chapter that the slow decline in the use of the traditional preamble which had set in since the mid-1530s was matched by a corresponding rise in wills which dedicated the testator's soul to God alone. Under Edward there continued to be an increase in the percentage of wills which began in this way. In the first three years of his reign forty-five percent of wills used such a preamble, while between 1550 and July 1553 over half the wills looked at did. This rise, however, does not equal the decline in the use of the traditional preamble.

Surprisingly, the percentage of wills which began with a clearly Protestant preamble, by which the soul was declared to be saved through the merits and passion of Jesus Christ alone, rose only slightly. At the end of Henry's reign the figure had been ten percent; for the whole of Edward's it was thirteen percent. The number of wills which did not mention the soul remained negligible, but there was a great increase in the percentage which employed formulae other than the most popular ones. Between 1550 and July 1553 five percent of wills left the soul to the Trinity, while the percentage of wills which employed other types of preamble more than trebled after 1547.

There had always been a small percentage of wills which had not used any of the main types of preamble. Prior to 1547 such preambles tended to be of two sorts. On the one hand, some wills dedicated the soul to 'God, etc.', which was clearly a shortened form of the full preamble, and is mostly found in wills copied into registers rather than in wills themselves. On the other hand, some wills' preambles were similar to the traditional formula, but mentioned either St Mary or the saints in Heaven, but not both.

After 1547 the dedications of earlier periods appeared in greater numbers. For example, between 1541 and 1546 four percent of wills dedicated the testator's soul to God and either St Mary or the saints in Heaven. Under Edward nine percent of wills used such formulae, with most neglecting to mention St Mary. However, there was also a greater variety in the types of other dedication employed, especially after 1550. Some wills included a mention of Christ in the preamble, but not with phraseology which was Protestant. For example, John Beckwith of Braintree, in his will of August 1552, left his soul to 'allmyghte God and to Jesus Chryst my sovyour & redemer', while that same year Thomas Motley of Broomfield left his soul to 'almyghtye God my savyor and redemer Jhus Xpt'.[65]

There also appeared some preambles which were either unique or very rare. Thus John Bocher of Great Burstead left his soul to 'God and all the blessed company of the faithful that had died in the Lord', while two wills which came from Mountnessing left the soul to 'God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to rest with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of Heaven'. The inspiration for the Mountnessing preambles may well have been the new form of bidding the common prayer which appeared in the Injunctions of 1547; the preambles are very similarly phrased to part of that bidding.[66] Thus the Edwardian religious changes had some success in etching themselves on men's minds.

The impression left by the religious preambles of the Edwardian era is that they come from a period of confusion. The changes which had occurred in religion had removed all certainty as to what was acceptable. Prior to 1530 religion had been clearly defined in a well established order. One aspect of that order had been the form of preamble with which a will began, and most people complied with the norm. By July 1553 the traditional order stood in tatters, and with it the certainty which had once applied. However, while the Reformers had succeeded in destroying the old, they had been unable to replace it successfully. In the case of will preambles, many testators felt that the traditional formula was no

longer acceptable. However, there was as yet no new norm. For this reason there was not a dominant form of preamble under Edward as there had been as recently as his father's final years. Instead, preambles appeared in a much greater variety than before.

Between 1547 and July 1553 the most popular form of preamble was the non-committal option of leaving the soul to God alone. However, that accounts for only about half of the wills written during this reign. Once again the most striking impression is the destruction of the old order, reflected in this case by the dramatic decline of the traditional preamble. However, there was no corresponding explosion of Protestant belief in will preambles, although the political climate was unlikely to have discouraged devout Protestants from declaring their faith thus. It proved easier to knock down expressions of traditional piety than to promote widespread Protestantism.

Changes in formulae were not merely confined to the fate of the soul, for after 1547 fewer wills stipulated where the body's final resting place should be. Between 1541 and 1546 around twenty percent of wills stated that the testator's body was to be buried either in the church or in a specific place in the churchyard. Between 1547 and 1549 ten percent of wills made such arrangements, and

the figure dropped to only six percent in the last three and a half years of Edward's reign. In addition, by the time Edward died twice as many testators stipulated that their bodies were to be buried 'where it pleases God' - rather than stating where the final resting place was to be - as had done so in 1547. Burials, however, clearly remained important, even if the place where this was to take place was less likely to be stated. Between 1547 and July 1553 ten percent of testators made special arrangements for that day, while a further ten percent requested that their bodies were brought honestly to earth.

Bequests to the parish churches of Essex fell considerably while Edward wore the crown. The percentage of wills leaving something to the high altar fell from over fifty percent in the final years of Henry's reign to twenty percent in the first three years of his son's. During the latter half of Edward's rule the figure dropped to a mere four percent. None of the wills looked at left anything to a light within a church, and only one, that of William Layhe of Hornchurch, made a bequest to an altar. This will was written in September 1549 and left 12d. to the altar of Jesus in Hornchurch church; however, a bequest of a similar sum to the Trinity altar there was redirected to the poor box.[67] Four percent of testators remembered their parish churches under Edward, compared

with about twenty percent between 1541 and 1546, while only two Edwardian testators remembered a parish church other than their own, both of whom composed their wills before 1550.[68]

This decline in investment can be explained partially by those changes to church decor discussed above. For example, the destruction of side altars and images removed the objects of much lay investment. Furthermore, official teaching now denounced as false the doctrine of Purgatory and thus questioned the whole rationale behind most bequests to the church, which had been to ease the testator's journey to Heaven. Additionally, as has been shown above, church property was seen as being under threat, which would not encourage investment in the Church. It is possible also that some people did not want to invest in a heretical church, as has been suggested for Lancashire, although there is no evidence of this in Essex.[69]

Most of the bequests made to parish churches at this time were for church repairs. For example, Robert Fanwyck left 3s. 4d. towards the repair of steeple of South Ockendon church.[70] Thus money was given for maintenance rather than to objects which at some later date might be confiscated. The only other specific gift to a church occurred in 1551 when Henry Crampe returned to the church

of Navestock 'the coope which I bowght of the parish'.[71] Whether Crampe had always intended to return this item to the church but was waiting for a regime more well-disposed to the traditional order, or whether, as death approached, he felt remorse for an act of spoliation, remains unknown.

As has already been shown, within the first few months of Edward's reign the government adopted a stance which was hostile to the doctrine of Purgatory and decried the usefulness of intercession for the souls of the departed. Not surprisingly, therefore, there was a drop in the percentage of wills which sought such intercession. Forty-two percent of testators had requested intercessory aid for their souls in the last three years of Henry's reign, but only sixteen percent did so in the first three years of Edward's. Between 1550 and July 1553 the figure was only seven percent.

Many Edwardian testators who desired intercession either arranged for a month's mind, or requested that the residue of their goods be disposed for the good of their souls. Of the wills examined, only that of John Schoping of Buttsbury mentioned trentals, he requesting that two be performed in his parish church.[72] Some still openly linked the provision of poor relief to the benefit that it brought a testator's soul. Thus, between 1549 and the end of Edward's reign, Thomas Athay of Rettendon, Robert

Dwcatt of Barking, Joan Collyn of Beauchamp Roothing and Thomas Daye of Chigwell all left the poor money in return for prayers for their souls. The doctrinal confusion which the religious changes caused is highlighted by the fact that the last two of these wills began with a fully Protestant preamble.[73] Others who wanted their souls to be aided by prayers turned to friends to perform the task. Thus Brian Barwik of Barking, in a will dated October 1548, left 6s. 8d. to William Wight and his wife for them to pray for the souls of Barwik and all Christians.[74] Even if the Church would not provide intercession, other means could be sought.

While some still adhered to the old ways, there is evidence also of the spread of Protestantism. Sermons were the favourite method used by Protestants to spread the Word, and some testators left money for these. An early example comes from 1545, when Augustine Salyng of Stanford Rivers left the parson of Chipping Ongar 13s. 4d. for a sermon in either Chipping Ongar or Stanford; the will began with a fully Reformed preamble. Similar bequests were made by testators in Waltham Holy Cross in 1547, and in Epping and Billericay in 1549; this last sermon was to be an annual event.[75]

The provision of sermons, however, did not rely solely on death-bed generosity. The churchwardens of Harwich

recorded the intriguing fact that on 27 March 1552 5s. was given 'to ye curet of Walten Covenes...at ye requeste of sarten of ye parrysche for yt he made ij sarmonds yt daye'.[76] Evidently some Harwich parishioners actively sought to bring the Word to their parish. Other preachers in Essex were so active that they were distracting the people from their labours by preaching on work days. This provoked the Privy Council, in June 1550, to order the bishop of London to ensure that forthwith preaching occurred only on holy days.[77] It is uncertain how many were converted by such preaching, but some certainly did respond to the Word, as was borne witness during the persecutions of the following reign.

Evidence of the spread of extreme Reformed views in Essex comes from Bocking. A report came before the Privy Council of a gathering of about sixty people from both Kent and Essex in the house of Thomas Upchar at Christmas 1550. John Strype claimed that these people were Anabaptists and Pelagians, and it is known that they discussed the necessity of ceremonies, especially whether a man should kneel or stand at prayer with either a bare head or a covered one. Their conclusion was that ceremonies were immaterial, and all that was important was a man's heart before God.[78]

Recent historians have classified those who attended this gathering as 'Freewillers', and although Professor Dickens claims the evidence 'suggests a subdued and anglicised type of Anabaptism', Claire Cross asserts 'that they had developed out of the Kentish Lollard tradition rather than been directly influenced by continental Anabaptism'.[79] These people certainly stood outside mainstream Protestantism, but there is no evidence that they advocated rebaptism, a central tenet of Anabaptist belief. The Privy Council, however, seems to have been more concerned with the numbers involved than with what was discussed.

Bequests which had a markedly Protestant taint were very few and far between in the reign of Edward. However, many Edwardian testators did give to charity, which was a practice encouraged by the 1547 Injunctions. In the pre-Reformation and Henrician eras charitable gifts were specifically made in between fifteen and twenty percent of wills. Under Edward the percentage who gave to public works, such as the highways, remained comparable to the figure from earlier periods, with seven percent doing so. However, gifts to the poor rose from thirteen percent between 1541 and 1546 to twenty-nine percent during the first three years of Edward's rule, reaching forty-four percent between 1550 and July 1553. Furthermore, from 1547 poor boxes appeared in the churches of Essex in

compliance with the Injunctions, and testators soon began to leave money to these. Between 1547 and 1549 twelve percent of testators remembered the parish poor box, as did seventeen percent in the last three and a half years of Edward's reign.

This increase in charity had a variety of reasons. On the one hand, it was shown in Chapter One that the earlier figures of charitable giving were certainly lower than was truly the case, for foundations such as obits often had a charitable element which was not always expressed. On top of this, the provision of charity was one of the few traditional forms of pious bequest still open to donors in Edwardian Essex, and it was the one least under threat. Related to the desire to continue traditional practices, there was likely to have remained a feeling amongst testators that in providing charity they were performing a good work which would benefit their souls. Some wills still openly expressed such a belief, while the phrasing of the Injunctions may have led some to that conclusion, in spite of Protestant intentions to the contrary, for clerics were to declare to their congregations:

> that to relieve the poor is a true worshipping of God, required earnestly upon pain of everlasting damnation; and that also whatsoever is given for their comfort is given to Christ himself, and so is accepted of him that

He will mercifully reward the same with everlasting life.[80]

Overshadowing everything else was the economic hardship of the mid-Tudor period. From the late 1540s there were a series of poor harvests, due mainly to bad weather. Furthermore, an attempt to counter inflation by debasing the coinage in May 1551 backfired badly and prices continued to rise.[81] Thus it was a time when the need for charity may have seemed more acute than in earlier periods, and so testators were encouraged to give; indeed, this was possibly the case in London.[82] The need for charity was clearly felt in the parishes. Profits from the sale of church goods often went towards poor relief, and the churchwardens of Brightlingsea recorded in their church inventory of 1552 that they had purchased rye in Colchester and transported it to their parish expressly for this purpose.[83]

5] THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EDWARDIAN REFORMATION

The records which remain from the reign of Edward make it much easier to trace the course of the official Reformation than to discover the popular response to it in the parishes. With the exception of those who wrote a will, little is known of the beliefs of the laity at this

time. The general impression is that people conformed to the changes, but with little enthusiasm. Churches were stripped of their traditional decor, so much of what the people could invest in was removed. Such destruction not only made people unwilling to invest in religion, but also, to a certain extent, unable to do so. Protestantism did not contain much in which people could invest, while it denied that such investment in itself was of any benefit to the donor's soul. The net result was that by the time Edward died around half the wills looked contained no bequests of a religious or charitable nature, and most of those which made such bequests left something only to the poor.

As neither religious conservatives nor radicals provoked widespread persecution under Edward their numbers and beliefs cannot be assessed. The gathering of radicals at Bocking has been mentioned. The only Essex conservative whose tribulations are to be found was the vicar of Great Baddow. He was indicted in 1552 for having continued to say mass, but promised the Council that he would not transgress again.[84] The strength of both these parties was more clearly defined in the next reign, but it seems that the committed of either persuasion were in the minority. Changes in religious practice occurred in the parishes of Essex during Edward's reign, and these undoubtedly left their mark upon consciences. However,

the result was more likely to have been acquiescence, accompanied by uncertainty and confusion, than conversion.

CHAPTER FOUR

RELIGION DURING THE REIGN OF MARY

1] THE RESTORATION OF CATHOLICISM IN MARIAN ESSEX

Mary Tudor ruled for just over five years, and in that time she attempted to reverse the process of religious change which had been pursued in England since the 1530s. Whether the restoration of the Catholic religion was popular or not is one indication of how widely and deeply Protestant doctrines had taken root by 1553. The seven sets of churchwardens' accounts which cover at least part of this reign show that all the churches concerned saw restoration to some degree. Whether this was done out of genuine affection for what had been lost during the previous two decades, or merely reflected the need to conform, is another matter, however.

The accounts from Broomfield for 1553 reveal that by the end of that year the process of restoration was well under way. Amongst the first few purchases were the Paraphrases of Erasmus and a Book of Homilies, no doubt to comply with the demands of the Edwardian regime, albeit belatedly. Entries after the change of sovereign, however, reflect a change of religious policy. A return to Catholic services is indicated by the purchase of a mass book and a portasse for 3s. 4d.. Furthermore, the

church restored some of its traditional decor. A total of 13s. 6d. was spent on buying two candlesticks, a holy water pot, a rood and a wooden cross, while 3s. was paid for the altar to be set up. As the materials for the altar were not bought, it seems that it had been put in storage and not sold after it had been removed during Edward's reign.[1]

Thus there was a speedy reversion to Catholicism in this parish before it was required by law. In August 1553 Mary had issued a proclamation which offered her subjects freedom of conscience in religious matters, sure that the majority would joyfully return to the Catholic fold after so many years of schism. Broomfield was not the only parish to respond quickly to this opportunity of worshipping in the traditional manner, for in London, too, many were delighted by the turn of events.[2]

A total restoration of the Catholic order in Broomfield, however, could not be achieved straightaway, nor with ease. The churchwardens' accounts from this parish are not continuous, but cover occasional years from 1540. The only other set of accounts which come from Mary's reign seem to have been made in June 1558.[3] By that time Broomfield church appears to have been in some financial difficulties, for the first item recorded was the sale of a chalice for £1 11s. 5d.. The sale of church

plate at times of need was common, and examples of this already examined occurred in Great Dunmow in the mid-1530s, and throughout Essex during Edward's reign. It is clear from the payments made in 1558 that Broomfield needed money to pay for work done both about the roodloft and the Easter sepulchre. The provision of images of St Mary and St John, the figures which stood either side of the rood, was of the upmost concern. Indeed, it seems that the churchwardens had been excommunicated and fined 'upon deffaulte of imagis lackeinge and not prouydid acordinge to the statute'; it was their duty to ensure that the necessary decor was provided. This parish was unfortunate enough to have just provided the required images when Mary died, which heralded a return to iconoclasm.

Therefore, although the return to the Catholic fold was welcomed in this parish, all the toing and froing of the previous two decades had made it hard for Broomfield to comply fully with the demands made upon it. That the lack of necessary decor was due to the cost involved, rather than because of wilful disobedience of official policy, is suggested both by the events of 1553, and by the fact that this parish was fined in the 1560s for lacking some of the paraphernalia of Protestant worship.[4]

Certain activities which had lapsed under Edward were restored by Mary through the injunctions for religion which were issued in March 1554. These ordered that all processions, holy days, fasting days and 'laudable and honest ceremonies' were to be observed according to the old order, as in Henry's time.[5] The restoration of such activities met a swift response in many parishes, both in Essex and throughout England.[6] For example, mention is made of a sepulchre not only in Broomfield but also in Great Dunmow, Great Hallingbury, Heybridge and Chelmsford. Collections on All Saints day were once more made in Great Dunmow, and bread and drink was bought for the ringers there 'on hallamas night'. In Chelmsford 8d. was 'payd to the ringers/ for ringing upon the assention day/ and corpus xpi daye as hath byn paid of olde custome'.[7]

Restoration, however, was not restricted to ceremonies. All the above places, along with Harwich, spent money on high altars, roods, church plate, cloths, banners, veils, vestments, crucifixes, books and torches. In Great Dunmow not only the high altar was restored, for payments were made for work around St John's altar too. In September 1558 the churchwardens of Harwich commissioned a man to paint the roodloft and to make an image of the church's patron saint. In Chelmsford a bell was bought both to ring on Rogation Day perambulations, and before a corpse on its way to burial. That parish also paid 2s. 'for

makyng of our Ladie crowne at the high alter/ and for mendyng of her handes and payntyng of the angelles'. Thus in Chelmsford at least, the church went beyond merely complying with the minimum requirements demanded by the authorities. Furthermore, this last payment may indicate that repairs were made to an image that had been concealed during Edward's reign, and which was restored to the church, slightly damaged, under Mary.[8]

At the same time as traditional decor reappeared in churches, the innovations of the Edwardian era were removed. When the altar was reerected in a church, the communion table disappeared, but as no set of accounts records the sale of such tables their fate during the Marian period remains unknown. In Heybridge the 'scriptures' which had been written on the church's walls were removed, and a Bible was sold for 9s.. However, while the Church no longer felt the need to bring the Word directly to the people, this sale of a Bible suggests that there was still a market of those who desired access to it.[9]

The government did help in the restoration of church decor. In September 1553 the Privy Council ordered Sir Anthony Browne, who had been a commissioner for church inventories in the hundreds of Dengie, Rochford, Chafford, Becontree and the liberty of Havering, to return to the

parishes there all goods which had been confiscated and not yet sent to London.[10] The churchwardens' accounts of both Great Dunmow and Great Hallingbury also reveal a way in which the financial strain of restoration was ameliorated. The former merely recorded having received £36 0s. 4d. from Sir Thomas Josselyn, but more is revealed in the accounts from Great Hallingbury, where it is stated that £11 1s. 7d. was 'received at the handes of Syr Thoms Josselyn knyght accordyng to the Quenes or soueren ladys commandment as yt appered mor playnlyer in her graces warrant'.[11]

Since the 1540s Sir Thomas Josselyn had been appointed regularly to various commissions within Essex, and he was a justice of the peace. In 1552 he was one of the commissioners who enquired into what church goods remained in the hundreds of Ongar and Dunmow. Great Dunmow is in the second of these hundreds, while Great Hallingbury is in the neighbouring half hundred of Harlow. No inventories survive from this half hundred and the commissioners appointed for it are unknown, but the evidence of the Great Hallingbury accounts suggest that Josselyn was one of them. Whether the payments to these parishes came from Josselyn's own pocket, from goods in hand, or from money he had received from the sale of confiscated items, is unclear from the evidence which remains. What is certain is that these churches received

compensation for goods which had been confiscated during Edward's reign, from the man who had taken that property. How widespread this policy was remains unclear, however; no other examples of it have been discovered either in Essex or elsewhere.

The return of or reimbursement for confiscated goods was not the only way in which the government encouraged the process of restoration. In March 1554 the Privy Council made arrangements for altars to be erected in the parish churches of Prittlewell, Eastwood, Barling and North Shoebury, all of which are in the South-East of Essex. A gentleman in each parish was forced to give a bond to ensure this occurred, with each man liable to pay the queen £100 if an altar had not been restored in all four churches within two weeks.[12] Such an arrangement has not been discovered elsewhere, and it suggests that in these places restoration required some coercion before it was achieved. Whether this reluctance was because of religious opposition, or was due to some other consideration, such as the cost, remains unclear, however.

The process of restoration continued up to Mary's death. The excommunication of Broomfield's churchwardens has been mentioned above, but that was not the only Essex parish which needed prompting to continue the task. In Great Dunmow 8d. was paid to the 'pryvie sercher' for

things wanting in the church, seemingly late in the reign, whilst in Harwich a payment was made in September 1558 to John Swynartune, who had 'browght a comyssyon for ye reformassyon of thynges lakkynge in churches'. Only the queen's death brought an end to such pressures.[13]

Restoration was not confined solely to parish churches pursued by parish officials, however, for a few other individuals and organisations restored institutions which had ended during the previous reign. For example, in 1557-8 the corporation of Saffron Walden paid 3s. 4d. 'for kepyng the obyte for the ffownder of the scoole'.[14] In April 1523 the officers of the Holy Trinity guild in that town had received a licence to buy land to support a chaplain-cum-schoolmaster for a school which Joan Bradbury wished to found. Bradbury was the sister of a former vicar of Saffron Walden, John Leche, and part of the endowment of the school was specifically to fund an obit for Bradbury and Leche. The last time this obit had been recorded was in 1547-8, when the guild of Holy Trinity still existed; during the reign of Edward the running of this school passed from the guild to the new corporation, along with the guild's other secular responsibilities.[15]

In addition, some land which had supported intercessory institutions, and which had come into the crown's possession because of the Edwardian Chantries Act, was

returned to its former use. In 1514 Thomas Coo had left various properties in Hempstead and Wimbish to provide charity for fifteen poor men, and for the priest of the guild of St Thomas in Hempstead to pray for the souls of Coo, his family, and all Christians. These properties had been enfeoffed to William Mordaunt in 1517. In 1555 Robert Mordaunt, the son of William, was granted the aforesaid properties by the crown in order to fulfil Coo's will. Thus the son of the former feoffee of these properties was once again given the task of seeing a benefactor's wishes carried out.[16]

Another case appeared before the court of Chancery some time between 1556 and 1558. In this the plaintiff complained that property in the possession of John Mytchell, a yeoman, had formerly been left by William Totham to support an obit in Canewdon church, but it had been confiscated by the crown during Edward's reign, who had subsequently regranted it. Opposition to the Edwardian Chantries Act is shown by the plaintiff's assertion that the property 'neuar were nor owght to be in the possession of oure late souereigne lord', and that the use to which it was now put was 'contrary to all right equytie and good consians and contrary that good and godlie poupose ordynuant and dysposition hadd made by the said Willm Totham'. Clearly the plaintiff was a Catholic who feared that Totham's soul would suffer as intercession

on its behalf had ceased. In reply, Mytchell denied that the land in his possession had ever had such a use. Alas, the ruling on this case is unknown.[17]

The issues raised by this last case in particular highlight one of the major problems faced by the Church and government in Marian England. Mary realised that a forced return of Church property could not be achieved, a view confirmed by Parliament's deliberations prior to Cardinal Pole's return to England in November 1554. It was only once the future of alienated church property had been assured that reconciliation with Rome occurred.[18] The sale of so much Church property in the years since the break with Rome meant that it was not possible to legislate a return to the situation of 1536. Too many people, from all levels of society, had a vested interest in keeping secularised Church property in lay hands, and it had not been only those inclined to the Reformed doctrines who had benefited from the sale of this land in the previous two decades.

Most religious foundations which had disappeared since the 1530s were not revived under Mary. For example, neither the churchwardens of Great Hallingbury or Great Dunmow reestablished the obits which had been celebrated in their churches at the end of Henry's reign. No religious house was refounded in Essex, and no evidence

from this county has been found to indicate that religious guilds functioned under Mary. When property which had formerly supported such foundations had been secularised, the money was no longer available for the institution to be reestablished. Furthermore, the queen's policy simply sought restoration and not innovation; she wished to see the old order put back as exactly as possible.[19] Thus official policy relied on the willingness of people to return newly gained properties to their former uses; few were prepared to do this. If acts of pious restoration by the queen, such as occurred in Hempstead, were intended to set an example, then Mary was to be disappointed, despite the Catholic belief that a sinner could not be absolved yet retain the fruit of his misdeed. Even amongst devout Catholics the desire to establish religious guilds and the such like would have been tempered by the instability of the recent past.

If the return of Church property posed a problem which gave the government little scope for action, some reform of the parish clergy was possible.[20] As was mentioned in the previous chapter, a quarter of the 319 priests who were certainly beneficed in July 1553 were deprived for marriage under Mary. A few priests resigned before they were deprived, but the majority awaited events passively. The process of deprivation began in March 1554 when it was announced in the injunctions for religion, and the first

Essex priest to suffer was Thomas Donnell, rector of Toppesfield, who was deprived in that same month.[21] It was only in December 1557 that the last married priest in Essex was removed from his benefice of Great Bentley.

The personnel who made up the deprived clergy were very varied. They included at least five ex-religious, some devout Protestants, some consistent time-servers, and the vicar of Great Wendon, who in 1557 had to sue out a pardon for having murdered a man and his wife in their own home. It has been possible to trace the movements of only thirty-six of the deprived between their deprivation and Mary's death. Of these, two were burned, five went into exile, and one was sent to the Tower for spreading slanderous rumours about the king and queen. Thus less than ten percent of the deprived were clearly hostile to the religious realignment which occurred under Mary, although that number does include the only two deprived clerics who had been ordained according to the English ordinal. One of these, Robert Drakes, rector of Thundersley, was burnt at Smithfield in 1556, while the other, Richard Gresham, rector of Great Chesterford, became an exile in Basle.[22] No evidence has been found of Essex ministers who were ordained under Edward being reordained as Catholic priests under Mary.

The lack of convinced Protestants amongst the married clergy of the 1550s is not surprising, for they were not deprived because they were regarded as Protestants. Rather, they were deprived because Catholic priests were required to be celibate. The reason why married clergy, even if they were prepared to leave their wives, were deprived was to show the enormity of the sin which they had committed. The punishment for marriage was much harsher than it was for incontinence because the former was a premeditated act and not a momentary lapse.

The Marian Injunctions stated that a deprived married priest, once he had performed a penance and been reconciled, could, at the bishop's discretion, be given a benefice distant from the parish he had previously served, thus removing him from both his former flock and his former wife. Twenty-eight priests certainly divorced their wives and received new benefices within Essex.[23] Others no doubt served benefices outside the county having left their spouses, while some probably acted as curates. It is possible that a few priests remained with their wives, however. William Lynch was deprived of both his benefices of Beauchamp Roding and Willingale Doe in the Spring of 1554, and he reappeared only at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, restored to both livings, and with his wife.[24]

A further five priests were deprived for non-residence: Robert Dent, rector of Upminster, John Gough, vicar of Braintree, Martin Reason, vicar of Ugley, Richard Ward, vicar of Epping, and Charles Waynwright, rector of Vange.[25] Pluralism, and the non-residence which invariable accompanied it, was endemic in the Church throughout the Medieval and Early Modern periods, but Cardinal Pole was very careful to permit clerics to hold more than one benefice only when it was unavoidable.[26] The Essex clergy who were deprived for non-residence were extremely negligent; for example, Gough, Reason and Ward provided no curates, while the one provided on Waynwright's behalf served the cure indifferently. Thus there was some effort on the part of the authorities to provide a clerical body which approached the standards expected of it. Such a task, however, was impossible to achieve, especially because of the length of Mary's reign.

2] POPULAR PIETY UNDER MARY

Thus the re-establishment of the Catholic Church in England often revolved around restoration: church decor, services, plate, vestments and an unmarried clergy all returned, to greater or lesser degrees, under Mary. Obviously this process provoked a variety of responses amongst the laity. Some Essex people remained ardent

Protestants during this reign, and they will be examined in the next section. Here, trends which are visible in the religious practises and expressions of belief amongst a wider cross-section of the community will be examined. Once again the most plentiful sources of information for these are wills, 358 of which have been looked at from the Marian period. In using these documents, however, it is necessary to remember the problems and limitations of this source noted in Chapter Three.

A general observation is that there was a slight revival in traditional bequests and expressions of piety. However, at no time under Mary did these reach the levels they had held at the end of Henry's reign; indeed, the Marian figures are seldom over half those recorded between 1544 and 1546. This popular reticence to embrace the old order may have been partly because of Protestant influence. However, confusion caused by years of religious change, coupled with a sense of religious instability, was probably a more important factor in the majority of cases.[27]

A clear example of the trend mentioned above can be seen in will preambles. The percentage of wills during the first half of Mary's reign which had a traditional preamble was double the eleven percent at the end of Edward's. Between July 1553 and 1555 the figure was

twenty-two percent, and during the latter half of the Marian era thirty-five percent of testators used a traditional preamble. Some testators clearly felt that it was either no longer appropriate, or no longer wise, to leave phrases in their wills which could bring their Catholic orthodoxy into question. For example, the will of Harry Asbroke, a tailor from Barking, written in November 1555 used a traditional preamble, with God described as 'my maker and redeemer', and St Mary called 'mother of our saviour Jesus Christ'. However, the will had originally contained a specific mention of Christ, placed between the reference to God and that to St Mary, which was crossed out.[28] Jesus, of course, is as important to the Catholic faith as He is to Protestants, but the removal of His name from this preamble seems to indicate that in the end this testator decided to express his orthodoxy by using a traditional preamble, without any innovations.

The reign of Mary certainly occasioned a decline in the two other most popular forms of preamble, that is to say when the soul was left to God alone (neutral preamble), or was to be saved only through the merits of Christ's death and passion (Protestant preamble). The percentage who adopted the neutral option fell from over half of testators at the end of Edward's reign to forty-three percent between July 1553 and 1555. Thirty-eight percent

of wills began in such a way between 1556 and Mary's death. A constant thirteen percent of wills had used a Protestant preamble under Edward; during the first half of his elder sister's reign nine percent did, and the figure fell a further two percent between 1556 and the accession of Elizabeth.

Thus there was a clear shift back towards traditional formulae during Mary's reign. However, whereas before 1547 over half of testators had left their souls to the mercy of God, St Mary and all the saints, under Mary only a third did so. Furthermore, slightly more testators opted to use a neutral preamble than used a traditional one. This is a further indication that most people were either confused or uncertain as to what should or should not be believed, and so they chose not to commit themselves either way. The Catholic Church may have been restored, but the laity did not demonstrate that they were certain what this meant, nor that they believed this turnabout was final.

Confusion over the state of religion is indicated further by the continued appearance in large numbers of preambles which did not belong to any of the three major categories. As had been the case under Edward, the majority of these resembled a traditional preamble but omitted the reference to St Mary or, more rarely, to the

saints in Heaven. Other formulae left the soul to the Trinity, or coupled Jesus Christ with God the Father but did not use Protestant phraseology. Seventeen of the wills looked at began by leaving the soul to 'God, etc.', but as all but three of these are wills copied into registers, such preambles are probably shorthand versions of the originals.

A few preambles combined both traditional and Protestant phrases, such as that used by Thomas Wantt of Great Dunmow in 1555. His soul was left to 'the infynyght mercye of almytye God & to our ladye Seyncte Marie and to the holy company of Heauen trustyng to be saued by the meritts of Chrysts passyon': similar examples occur in Elsenham, East Ham and Barking in 1556, and Barking again in 1557.[29] It is true, of course, that Christ's sacrifice had always been given a central role in salvation by the Catholic Church. However, it is more likely that preambles such as these show confusion on the part of the wills' writers rather than a firm understanding of the complexities of Catholic eschatology.

It was shown in the previous chapter that under Edward there was no norm for will preambles. This situation continued under Mary. Indeed, no single form of preamble is found in two-fifths of wills between July 1553 and November 1558. Therefore, it seems that there was even

less consensus and more confusion during Mary's reign, when writers came to composing a will, than there had been before. A reason for this may be that religious policy under Mary went against the path her father and brother, however tentatively, had followed. Whatever sense of progress towards the goal of Reform there had been during the previous two decades was destroyed by Mary's policies. This in turn would make people even less certain where religious truth lay, and which creed provided the answer.

Some changes occurred in testators' orders concerning the fate of their bodies; such alterations, however, were very slight. Under both Edward and Mary few testators wanted to be buried in their parish church, or specified where in the churchyard their final resting place should be. Only one will written in Mary's reign sought burial in another parish. One change which did occur was a slight decline in the percentage of wills which stated that the body should be buried 'where it pleases God'. This phrase had gained in popularity under the Protestant regime of Edward, and in the second half of his reign twenty percent of wills contained it. The figure declined to seventeen percent during the first two-and-a-half years of Mary's reign, and fell by a further two percent in the period between 1556 and the queen's death. In contrast, there was a small increase in the percentage of testators who made special arrangements for either their burial or a

month and/or year mind. Arrangements such as these were less common under both Edward and Elizabeth than they were when the regime was more traditional in matters of religion.

Thus the return to Catholicism under Mary seems to have nurtured a slight shift amongst testators towards traditional formulae and rituals when they came to consider the fate of their bodies and souls. Several testators followed the example of John Bovlynge, a labourer from Romford, who in his will dated August 1556 used a traditional preamble and requested that he be buried 'to the faithful devout order of Christ's Holy Catholic Church'.[30] However, only a minority of testators used forms which were of the traditional ilk. For every will which had a traditional preamble, two used another formulae, while less than one-in-five testators made special arrangements for their burial or mentioned a month mind or year mind.

When traditional bequests of a religious nature are examined a similar pattern of a slight recovery during the Marian period is again evident. At the end of Edward's reign four percent of wills contained a bequest to the high altar in recompense for forgotten tithes. In the first half of Mary's reign the figure remained at around five percent, but between 1556 and the queen's death it

trebled, with fifteen percent of testators leaving money for this purpose. In the second half of Mary's reign two testators left money to lights in their churches, while the percentage of wills which contained a bequest to the local parish church rose from four percent at the end of Edward's reign to nine percent between Mary's accession and 1555. During the latter half of the queen's reign fifteen percent of testators remembered their parish church.

Most bequests to parish churches were for general maintenance and did not specify particular tasks. A few testators, however, left money to help restore traditional church decor. For example, in 1554 South Ockendon church was bequeathed 6s. 8d. to amend ornaments, while in Great Bardfield a bequest of 3s. 4d. was 'to be leyd out & bestowed towarde some one boke which is moste nedefull to be had there'. Further bequests specifically for church ornamentation are to be found in Rainham and Great Baddow, both in 1556.[31]

The revival in investment in church fabric suggests that church buildings were still the focus of some communal pride. Furthermore, some of the laity wished to restore their local church to something resembling its former glory. Such a desire, however, may not necessarily have been only an expression of true Catholic piety. This

investment may reflect the desire to fulfil a traditional image of what the parish church should look like. Thus we need to look elsewhere for evidence of popular belief in Catholic doctrines.

In earlier periods the foundation of intercessory institutions had been a common expression of traditional piety. During Mary's reign there was an increase in the percentage of testators who requested some form of intercession. Between 1550 and June 1553 seven percent of wills sought such aid for the testator's soul. In the first half of Mary's reign this figure rose to twelve percent, and to fifteen percent between 1556 and the queen's death. Often such intercession was associated with services and ceremonies performed at either the burial or the month and/or year mind. For example, wills from both Great Baddow and Barking, written in the early part of Mary's reign, requested that dirges and masses be performed at the testators' burials.[32] Four percent of testators wanted intercession paid for out of the residue of their goods once all other legacies had been performed.

Other forms of intercession were still sought by some, however. In 1554 Richard Harvy, a Barking fisherman, left the overseer of his will 2s. 'to pray for my soul and all Christian souls', while in December 1556 Thomas Baker of Great Dunmow left a tenament to fund an obit, which was to

last the duration of his lease on the tenement.[33] In May 1557 Sir Robert Rochester was granted a licence to found a perpetual chantry in a chapel erected by him in Terling church, endowed with land worth £12 per annum.[34] Another licence to found a chantry was granted to William Bendlowes in November 1557. This was to be at the Holy Trinity altar in Great Bardfield church, and was to have an endowment of twenty marks. Furthermore, Bendlowes, who possessed the advowson of Great Bardfield church, was licensed to dissolve the vicarage and restore a rectory.[35] Whether these chantries were ever founded is unknown. However, the intention of Rochester and Bendlowes to do so, together with Baker's wish to establish an obit, not only show a continued desire in certain quarters for intercession, but also a belief by some people that the Marian return to the Catholic fold was permanent.

Other members of Essex's ruling elite were prepared to invest in traditional institutions too. Both Lord Riche and Sir William Petre received licences under Mary to found institutions run by priests to support poor people, the former in Felsted and the latter in Ingatestone.[36] Riche's foundation was altered under Elizabeth into Felsted school,[37] but the foundation of schools was not restricted to that reign. In 1558 Sir Anthony Browne received a licence to found a free grammar school in Brentwood, run by a priest and two wardens.[38]

In contrast to the slight increase in the percentage of bequests for purely religious purposes, the reign of Mary saw a sizable decline in the proportion of wills which made charitable donations. From being forty-four percent at the end of Edward's reign, under thirty percent of wills left something to the poor during the reign of Mary. Furthermore, less than five percent of wills remembered the parish poor box while Mary ruled, whereas during the last three-and-a-half years of her brother's reign the figure had been nearer twenty percent. There was a drop in the percentage of wills which made bequests to public works too. Seven percent of wills had left money for such purposes during Edward's reign, but this fell to four percent while his elder sister wore the crown.

Such a decline in charity at this time is hard to explain. It was argued in the last chapter that the increase in charitable donations under Edward was partly due to the harsh economic conditions of that period, which made the need for charity both more acute and more obvious. But if the situation had been bad in Edward's reign it was worse in Mary's. The worst harvests during the mid-Tudor period occurred between 1555 and 1557, and it has been estimated that this caused the price of food to double. Furthermore, in 1558 there was a killing epidemic, possibly influenza. In total, the population of England may have fallen by about a fifth between 1555 and

1560.[39] The harshness of the times is reflected by the churchwardens' accounts of Harwich. In both 1556 and 1557 the parish had to fund the burial of paupers found dead there.[40] Why, then, did charity dry up when it was most needed?

It seems that changes were occurring in the whole attitude of testators, and the very fact that the economic situation was so harsh during Mary's reign may have made people more selective when they made their wills. Generally speaking, wills written from the 1550s onwards were longer and more detailed than those from earlier periods. At the same time, however, fewer wills contained either religious or charitable bequests. Rather, testators were more concerned with providing exclusively for their surviving kin, especially spouses and children. From the beginning of the reign of Edward to 1570, the date at which this study ends, over half the wills examined contain no religious or charitable bequest; during the reigns of the first two Tudors such omissions were rare. The harsh conditions of the mid-1550s may have added momentum to this trend as there was less to go round. Such a change in attitudes is reflected in the will of Margaret Hubbard, a widow from South Weald, written in September 1557. According to this, the money from the residue of her goods was to be 'bestowed to poorfolks & specially to my poor kinsfolk'.[41] Wills

certainly reflect the religious alterations of the sixteenth century; however, they indicate wider social changes too.

The Marian regime witnessed the restoration of the basic framework of Catholicism within the county of Essex and, as some churchwardens' accounts show, the government both encouraged and oversaw this process. In many places restoration began early in the reign and continued to the queen's death. Furthermore, as the reign progressed the restoration of Catholicism attracted more popular support, as is seen both in bequests for church fabric and the desire for intercession. However, active restoration of the traditional order never attracted more than minor support under Mary, and investment in the traditional order never approached the levels seen in 1547.

The reason for the limited active support given to Mary's religious policies are varied and uncertain. The possibility of a general change in attitude amongst the laity has been discussed above. Another reason for the lack of activity may have been a genuine sense of confusion and uncertainty caused by two-and-a-half decades of religious change and counter-change. While those who made provision to found obits or chantries in Marian Essex no doubt believed the return to Catholicism was permanent, others probably felt the lack of an obvious Catholic heir

foreboded further religious instability and change once Mary died. In such a situation, the majority were unlikely to have known what to do, or were not prepared to act in a way that might be viewed unfavourably by a future regime.

It is possible also that government policies alienated some of the population. Xenophobia may have been generated by the regime's Spanish associations. It is claimed that all Londoners lamented Mary's marriage, while Philip certainly would not have ingratiated himself with the authorities of Harwich who, in 1558, made arrangements to welcome him to their town only for him not to come.[42] Furthermore, the persecution of Protestants may have have adversely affected the government's popularity. As will be shown in the next section, Protestantism had certainly taken firm root in some quarters by July 1553, and the martyrs could attract sizable support at times.

3] PROTESTANTISM IN MARIAN ESSEX

Essex has long been recognised as an important centre of early Protestantism. For example, Professor Dickens has found the names of 304 Essex heretics in Dr. Fines Biographical Register of Early English Protestants...1525-1558 (1986), and it is certain that the identity of many

more have not come down to the historian.[43] The strength of the faith of these Protestants was severely tested by the Marian regime, and the trials and tribulations which they faced give some insight into how deep-rooted Protestantism had become by the mid-1550s.

Christine Garrett provided profiles of over twenty Essex men who fled to the Continent during Mary's reign; six of them were accompanied by their wives. Those whom she discovered were mostly gentlemen or priests. However, a Chelmsford brewer, Anthony Robson, fled to Aarau with his wife and six children, while by June 1557 Thomas Upchar, a weaver from Bocking, was in Frankfort with his wife and two offspring.[44]

Upchar was clearly an ardent follower of Reformed doctrines, although the precise nature of his beliefs are questionable. It was recounted in the previous chapter that at Christmas 1550 a group of over sixty men from both Essex and Kent gathered at Upchar's house and discussed matters of religion, and it remains a point of debate whether they were Protestants, Lollards or Anabaptists. In 1555 Upchar was a prisoner of the King's Bench and took part in a heated dispute with other prisoners over predestination. This so divided the two parties involved that they refused to be reconciled. How Upchar escaped to Frankfort is unknown, but upon his return to England, at

the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, he was ordained a deacon by Grindal, and later became successively the rector of Fordham and of St Leonard's, Colchester. The last we hear of him is that he resigned his Colchester benefice in 1582 and joined the Classical Movement.[46]

It is clear that the list of exiles provided by Miss Garrett is not comprehensive, however. In 1556 the government ordered an inquisition in Essex to establish who had fled from their parishes because of religion, with the intention of cutting off their means of sustenance. The findings of this commission are extant for twelve of the nineteen hundreds and half hundreds of Essex. Whether through carelessness, or because of deliberate negligence, these returns contained many gaps. However, the names of several more people who left their homes because of their religious beliefs are provided.[47]

Fourteen men, four with their wives, were reported to this inquisition. Two men were known to have fled abroad, one of whom, Thomas Crawley, is mentioned by Miss Garrett.[48] Seven were said to have remained in England, but their precise location was unknown. In five cases the presenting jury claimed they had no idea where the fugitives had gone. One further Marian Exile appears amongst the authors of extant wills from the archdeaconry of Essex. The will of John Sckill was written in May

1558, but received probate only in 1560. Describing himself as 'an exile for the testimony of Jesus Christ', Sckill arranged for his will to be delivered by a friend in Bow, and the residue of his goods to be given to the congregation of Christ's Church in London. Apart from his will, there appears to be no other record of this exile.[49]

The flight of Protestants was no doubt prompted because their beliefs were widely known. Furthermore, many of them abhorred the thought of being contaminated by papistry, and thus left to worship in places where the Reformation had been firmly established.[50] The 1556 inquisition discovered that three couples had fled from Great Braxted, and three men had left the town of Buttsbury. The reason for leaving may have been a fear amongst these Protestants that conservative neighbours would inform the authorities of their beliefs; as the inquisition shows, juries from these towns were not hesitant to report those who had fled.[51] Therefore, these returns may not only indicate that there was a Protestant enclave in certain towns, but also that there was an ardent traditionalist community too. However, even if this was the case, the strength of neither party can be gauged from the evidence that remains.

The story of Protestantism in Marian Essex does not only involve exiles, however, for this county provided

John Foxe with many stories to fill the pages of his Acts and Monuments. The martyrologist recounts the tales of sixty-one men and women who were either burnt in Essex, or came from there and died elsewhere. A further six martyrs whose place of origin was not mentioned by Foxe were possibly sent to London from this county. Furthermore, two men and a woman died in prison before they reached the stake, while George Eagles, alias Trudgeover, was hanged, drawn and quartered at Chelmsford in 1557. Although the accusation against Eagles was one of treason, it was based upon the charge that his illicit preaching activities had attracted large crowds, and thus threatened sedition.[52] Of the sixty-seven martyrs who either certainly or probably had connections with Essex, fifty-one were men.

The places of origin are known for fifty-five of the martyrs. Thirteen came from the town of Colchester, and a further seventeen from either of the neighbouring deaneries of Lexden or Tendring. Six martyrs came from the parish of Bocking, which lies to the West of Lexden and was in the jurisdiction of Canterbury. There was also a martyr from White Notley, in the deanery of Witham. Thus the North-East of Essex provided the greatest concentration of martyrs in this county. Furthermore, two of the condemned Protestants who died in prison came from Lexden and Tendring deaneries, and George Eagles originated from Moze in Tendring.

The Colchester area was well known for its Protestant sympathies. In addition to those who were burnt, twenty-two men and women from the vicinity of that town were sent to London in 1557 because of their Protestant beliefs. However, the authorities are said by Foxe to have feared the consequences of putting so many to death at once, and so accepted 'a very easy submission for them'.[53]

The religious climate of Colchester was described to Bishop Bonner by a priest, Thomas Tye, in 1557:

> They [i.e. Protestants] assemble together upon the sabbath-day in the time of divine service, sometimes in one house, sometimes in another, and there keep their conventicles and schools of heresy...The ministers of the church are mocked in the open streets, and called knaves. The blessed sacrament of the altar is blasphemed and railed upon in every house and tavern. Prayer and fasting is not regarded...The occasion riseth partly by reason of John Love of Colchester-heath (a perverse place); which John Love was twice indicted of heresy, and thereupon fled with his wife and household...Nevertheless, the said John is come home again, and nothing said or done to him. Whereupon the heretics are wonderfully encouraged, to the great discomfort of good and catholic people, which daily

pray to God for the profit, unity, and restoration of his church again.[54]

As Tye wished to get various Protestants arrested, no doubt he painted as black a picture as he could. Furthermore, many of the activities which he described sound more like anticlericalism and popular scepticism, which possibly derived from Lollardy, than actual Protestantism. However, all such activities indicate hostility towards the traditional order, while the existence of conventicles shows that there was an organised Protestant underground. Furthermore, this complaint implies that the town authorities turned a blind eye to much Protestant activity. In spite of such hostility to the Catholic order, however, this letter suggests that many in the town desired a return of unity, and that they associated this with the Catholic past.

Further evidence of hostility towards the old order, together with an adherence to Reformed teachings, can be seen in the North-East of Essex, however. In February 1554 the Privy Council ordered the sheriff of Essex to punish those people in the Colchester and Coggeshall areas who 'have gone about to dissuade the Quenes people there from frequenting suche Divine Service as is presentlie appointed by the lawes to be observed in the realme'.[55] The mass had been officially restored in December 1553, an

event which clearly provoked a hostile response from some in this area. However, there is no indication of how many people were advocating a boycott, nor how successful their persuasions were.

The continuation of Protestant worship in this part of Essex was not confined to the conventicles of Colchester, however. In April 1555 the sheriff of Essex was ordered to investigate reports of seditious preaching in the Harwich area, while in June that year the bishop of London was informed that 'foure parrisshes within the Soken of Essex do use still thinglyshe Service', and he was ordered to 'examyne the same and to punyshe thoffenders, and to send some of his chaplaynes into that shire to preache there'. Use of the Edwardian Prayer Book had been illegal since May 1554, and it is unlikely to be a coincidence that the vicar of Kirby-le-Soken, Thomas Whittle, was so ardent a Protestant that he was martyred in 1556. His presence no doubt nurtured the growth of Protestantism in that area.[56]

Another man who helped to maintain Protestant worship under Mary was George Eagles. The preaching activities of this tailor from Moze were known by the Privy Council, who in July 1556 asked Lord Darcy of Chich to be on the look-out for any trouble arising from Eagles' presence in the Harwich area.[57] Although, when he was finally captured in

1557, he was charged with treason and was hanged, drawn and quartered, rather than burnt as a heretic, Eagles' main influence was clearly religious; indeed, Foxe claimed that the treason charge was levelled merely in an attempt to 'cause him to be the more hated of the people'.[58]

Eagles' influence can be seen in a case brought in July 1556. Two men from Dedham and West Mersea were indicted at the quarter sessions for assembling at various times and in numerous places with twenty others, and 'there received, abetted and maintained George Egle, of Moose, tailor, otherwise called Trudy, in his heresies and schismatic sermons and preachings'.[59] No doubt it was because Eagles could attract a following such as this that he was perceived as being a threat.

While it appears that the North-East of Essex was the area of strongest Protestant sentiment the four deaneries in the South of the county which lie along the Thames also provided several martyrs. Working from West to East, we find that five people from the deanery of Barking were burnt, one from Chafford and six from Barstable. Rochford provided a single martyr. Furthermore, Margaret Ellis, a spinster from Billericay in Barstable, died in Newgate prison having been condemned to burn.[60]

An indication of Protestant worship in this area is provided by the case of William Tyms, a curate from Hockley in the deanery of Rochford. During Mary's reign there were preached in some woods in this parish two sermons, at which 'it is supposed there were a hundred persons at least'; Tyms was accused of having encouraged the preachers involved. The number who attended these sermons may have been exaggerated, but this story provides further evidence of a groundswell of popular Protestantism, and a willingness to pursue religious beliefs which were opposed to those of the authorities.[61]

Another point raised by this tale are the divisions which religion had created. The investigation into these sermons was led by the owner of the woods in which they occurred as he did not want his property 'polluted with sermons being preached in them'. The creation of factions within the community is indicated by other cases as well: two cripples from Barking were 'accused by some promoting neighbour of theirs', and William Munt and his family were reported for their continued absence from church by several other parishioners from Great Bentley, led by the priest.[62]

Thus while the identity of the informer who initiated the actions against martyrs is seldom indicated by Foxe, neighbours were a likely source of this information. This

seems to have been the case in London, where usually only the most adamant and disruptive of the Reformed community were reported.[63] When the accusations against Essex martyrs are reported by Foxe, activities which a Catholic would regard as showing their disruptive influence and the bad example they set are often mentioned. Protestants were reported by those who feared the dire consequences of the spread of heresy for the Christian, that is Catholic, community. Many martyrs first drew attention to themselves because they refused to attend church, for to do so would have meant violating the true religion with papist superstition. Those indicated in this way included Thomas Watts of Billericay, and William Munt, his wife and step-daughter, of Great Bentley.[64] Such a refusal, however, destroyed the unity of the parish.

Unlike the North-East and the South of the county, the remainder of Essex provided only a handful of martyrs. Two came from the deanery of Ongar and one each from those of Chelmsford and Dunmow. Waltham Holy Cross also provided one. The deaneries of Harlow, Newport, Sampford and Hedingham, in the West and North of the county, are not recorded as having provided anyone for the stake, and neither is Dengey, on the East coast. Despite the lack of martyrs, however, these areas were not untouched by the new teachings. The 1556 inquisition recorded the names of two men from Newport and one from Harlow hundreds who had

left their parishes because of their beliefs. Furthermore, the deaneries of Chelmsford and Witham, which produced only a single martyr each, provide respectively four and eight of the people recorded as having fled.[65] The lack of martyrs from these areas may indicate a lack of resolve on the part of Protestants to suffer for their faith rather than simply a lack of Protestants.

Protestantism became established in Essex partly because the county fulfilled many of the criteria which were most accommodating to the Reformed creed. The North-East of Essex, where the greatest concentration of Protestants appears to have been, was where the cloth-towns of Bocking, Coggeshall, Steeple Bumpstead, Great Bentley, Billericay, Horkesley and Dedham were, all of which became well-known centres of Protestantism. Another Protestant stronghold was Colchester, which was by far the county's largest urban centre. Large provincial towns elsewhere in England, such as Norwich, Bristol, Coventry and Ipswich, developed Protestant communities early on, as did cloth-towns throughout the South of the country, including a number in Kent, Suffolk, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire.[66]

Another type of town which contributed to Protestantism's early establishment and growth was the port, and in the North-East of Essex there were several of

these, particularly Harwich, Colchester and Maldon; Protestants were burnt in all these towns under Mary. Ports were influenced by those who had travelled abroad, by foreign visitors, and also facilitated the import of books, all of which contributed to the spread of Reformed ideas. Indeed, it has been asserted by Professor Dickens that 'few [ports] of any significance along the eastern and southern coasts fail to reveal a Protestant presence between 1530 and 1558'. The Thames, too, has been shown to be an important source of Protestant infiltration, and the Essex deaneries along that river were another area where Marian Protestants were concentrated.[67] Thus many parts of Essex provided an environment which favoured the early establishment of Protestant communities.

It is impossible to provide an accurate estimate of the numerical strength of Protestantism in Essex at this time. Clearly not all Protestants were martyred or exiled, and figures such as a hundred people attending sermons in the woods in Hockley, or twenty people gathering at various times to hear George Eagles preach, suggest that in places there were large numbers of Protestants. Furthermore, Protestant will preambles still appeared despite the nature of the Marian regime, and while some people no doubt hid Protestant sympathies behind a mask of conformity, as will be seen below others openly showed support for the martyrs as they died. All these factors

combine to suggest that some of the laity quickly adhered to Reformed teachings; indeed, evidence of this dates from the early-1530s.[68] However, Protestants were undoubtedly a minority of Essex's population at this time, even though Essex was one of the most Protestant counties in England. Indeed, in Colchester itself there is evidence of Catholics as well as Protestants, and it is not certain that even here the latter were no more than a minority.

The beliefs which brought the Marian martyrs to the stake were mostly a denial of the sacraments of the Catholic Church, and all held opinions within the Protestant mainstream. Freewillers had been discovered in Bocking in 1550, it is true, but the beliefs confessed to by the Marian martyrs would have been acceptable to the Edwardian Church. The nature of the eucharist after consecration was a topic of particular dispute with their Catholic persecutors, because all the martyrs denied the real presence. Thomas Hawkes, a gentleman who had left the household of the earl of Oxford when the Marian religious reaction began, was brought before the authorities for refusing to have his new-born son baptised in the Catholic manner. His refusal was because he claimed it used ceremonies not prescribed by Christ: similar arguments were used by him to deny the Church's teachings with regard to both the mass and confession, the efficacy of prayers for the dead, and the usefulness of

holy water.[69] Other martyrs, such as Margery Austoo, disliked idols, while some, like Ralph Allerton, were involved in the trade of prohibited books.[70]

Many of these beliefs were similar to those of the Essex Lollards discovered in the late-1520s. Indeed, the similarity does not stop there, for geographically the Lollards had come from the North-East of the county, which was precisely where Marian Protestantism was strongest.[71] It would be wrong to suggest that the Marian martyrs were Lollards rather than Protestants. However, Dr. Sheils' assertion that Lollardy was 'a small but significant part of the spiritual environment in which Protestantism was able to take root' seems to be correct.[72] Doubts may have been generated by Lollard criticism of the Catholic Church, but it was Protestantism which strengthened these. The strengthening effect that Protestantism had is shown by the major difference between the Lollards of the 1520s and the Marian martyrs: whilst the former all abjured, the latter were prepared to die for their faith.

Many of the martyrs are portrayed as welcoming their deaths and going to the stake joyfully. The first Protestant from Essex to suffer martyrdom under Mary was a nineteen-year-old apprentice from Brentwood, William Hunter. His troubles began when he insisted on reading the Bible in Brentwood chapel. In an ensuing argument

with the vicar of his parish, Hunter said: 'I would that you and I were now tied fast to a stake, to prove whether I or you would stand strongest in our faith'. This young man clearly saw the stake as a test of faith, and he reconfirmed that he did not fear death at the time of execution.[73] As Thomas Hawkes burnt he clapped his hands three times in a prearranged sign to the gathered spectators of his continued devotion to the Protestant cause.[74] Such actions no doubt heartened supporters of the condemned who attended the executions, and probably impressed other, less committed, witnesses of these spectacles.

It is possible that the sacrifice of the first Marian martyrs encouraged others to do likewise. This is suggested by the case Agnes Bongeor and Margaret Thurston, who were burnt at Colchester on 17 September 1557.[75] These two women had been condemned to burn with ten others on 2 August, but they had not been taken at that time. The execution of Thurston was deferred for some unspecified reason, while Bongeor's name was not correct on the writ, an error which needed to be rectified.

Both were deeply affected by being denied the opportunity to die for the Lord. Indeed, Foxe says of Bongeor: 'So little did she look for life, and so greatly did God's gifts work in her above nature, that death

seemed much better welcome than life'. As she sat in prison after the ten had died, Bongeor said to a friend, 'I am unhappy; the Lord thinketh me not worthy of this dignity [i.e. martyrdom]'. When finally they were burnt, 'they with great joy and glorious triumph gave up their souls, spirits, and lives, into the hands of the Lord'.

The concentration of martyrs in certain areas could partly be explained by attitudes such as these. In areas where others had died, those who were caught later were encouraged to do likewise so that they too could prove their faith. In localities where few sacrificed themselves, such as the deaneries of Witham and Chelmsford, Protestants seem to have been more likely to flee than burn. Furthermore, it is certain that not all of those who were brought before the authorities because of their beliefs stood firm. Two spinsters from Leigh, in the South-East of the county, were indicted before the quarter sessions for saying the eucharist remained bread and wine after consecration. They were committed to the Ordinary but no further action against them is recorded.[76]

Burnings were attended by various people in an official capacity. In March 1555 the Privy Council ordered both the earl of Oxford and Lord Rich to be present at burnings carried out in Essex, and in June that year both were required to help at those in Colchester, Manningtree and

Harwich, along with Sir John Raynesforth. Later that month, both Raynesforth and Edward Rery received thanks for their efforts on these occassions.[77] Furthermore, Harwich paid the expenses of one of its churchwardens, William Olyfe, when he attended the burning of Thomas Watts in Chelmsford that same Summer. Soon after Watts's death a burning occurred in Harwich itself, so it is possible that Olyfe was sent to study the organisation of such an event.[78]

However, others were present on these occasions too, and Foxe recounts that they often showed support for those who were executed. As William Hunter was brought to the stake, a gentleman said 'I pray God have mercy upon his soul', to which the gathered crowd replied 'Amen, amen'. When John Laurence was martyred at Colchester on 29 March 1555, Foxe says that the youth of the town gathered and repeated 'Lord, strengthen thy servant, and keep thy promise'. The clapping of Thomas Hawkes as he burned provoked 'applause and outcry of the people'.[79]

Sometimes an effort was made to make executions less of a spectacle. When a cripple and a blind man from Barking were condemned in 1556 they were executed early in the morning, doubtless to discourage onlookers.[80] On another occasion, as has been mentioned above, it was considered unwise to execute twenty-two people sent from Colchester.

However, exhibitions of support for the condemned no doubt contributed to a general change in policy which the authorities implemented regarding the burning of heretics.

When the burnings began they seem to have been used only in the last resort to get rid of those so set in their errors they would not listen to reason, and instead threatened the salvation of others with their heretical opinions. In 1555 fourteen people from Essex were burnt, thirteen of them within the county. Those who were executed in Essex died in eleven places spread throughout the county, and all were martyred on their own. Often these executions occurred in or near to the martyrs' home parish, which was the policy nationally at that time.[81]

These early burnings were intended to act as a warning to onlookers, showing the fate of heretics. Thus the stake was primarily regarded as a means of conversion. Indeed, Foxe portrays the ecclesiastical authorities attempting to persuade the Protestants to recant right up to the last moment, only to be rebuffed by the triumphant, self-assured martyr. The popular support which these early burnings generated, however, suggests that the government's policy backfired. It has been argued above that these first burnings may have given later martyrs the determination to meet their maker via the stake. For the

wider population, these martyrdoms may have generated some support for the Protestants.[82]

In 1556 a clear change in policy regarding the execution of heretics was implemented. In that year twenty-nine martyrs with Essex connections died. Of these, only six were burnt in Essex itself, and all of them died at Colchester in the same fire. The others died at either Smithfield or Stratford le Bow, and all were burnt in groups. Furthermore, the authorities seem to have been much less concerned with saving the condemned, and instead were determined to punish them with death. This pattern continued in 1557 when fifteen people who certainly had connections with Essex were martyred; a further six people who may have originated from this county were also burnt that year. The use of the stake purely as a means of mass execution can be seen in Colchester, where on 2 August 1557 ten people were burnt, six in the morning and the rest after lunch.[83]

By the Summer of 1557 some of those in authority were showing signs of reluctance to continue the slaughter, and such sentiments were not confined to Essex alone. On 28 July the Privy Council demanded to know why the sheriffs of Kent, Essex, Suffolk and Stafford, together with the mayor of Rochester and the bailiffs of Colchester, had delayed the executions of various people condemned for

heresy and passed to the civil authorities by the Church.[84] This may indicate some sympathy for the Protestants by those in authority; the commitment of Colchester's town council to the Catholic cause was questioned at this time by Thomas Tye. Then, in August, the sheriff of Essex was fined £10 as he was considered responsible for his deputy's actions, the latter having exempted a woman from execution.[85] Judging from the dates, it is possible that the woman concerned was either Agnes Bongeor or, more likely, Margaret Thurston, both of whom had been due to die with the ten other Colchester martyrs of 2 August. If this is the case, the reprieve was not welcomed by any side, for it has been shown above how these two women craved death. Whether because of a lack of Protestants to burn, or to growing opposition to the policy, the burnings were much less frequent in the last year of Mary's reign, when only three Essex people are recorded by Foxe as having died for their faith.

4] THE RELIGIOUS COMPLEXION OF MARIAN ESSEX

When Mary ascended to the throne she seems to have regarded Protestants as being a misguided minority and to have believed that the most people would return to the Catholic fold at the first opportunity. This explains why she was willing to allow religious freedom of conscience

at the beginning of the reign.[86] Furthermore, such a conviction on the part of Mary explains why this reign saw much emphasis placed on restoration and persecution, and little on religious education and conversion.

Some people clearly welcomed the chance to worship in the traditional way because, like the queen, they were deeply committed to the Catholic Church. In contrast, others continued to follow the path of Reform. The majority, however, adopted neither option, and instead flowed with the tide. For some, this conformity was the result of confusion. Others would have wished to obey the authorities. It is likely that some people did not care what the religion of the land was, while other people may have welcomed the return of traditional religious practices simply because they were familiar and comprised religion as they imagined it should be. Indeed, it has been asserted that 'The prevailing impression at all levels of society is that uncertainty was the chief legacy of the schism'.[87]

However, the years since the break with Rome had witnessed many changes, and these could not be swept away. Twenty years of insecurity and change had made many activities less common or disappear completely. People gave less frequently to the Church; intercessory institutions had disappeared; the possibility of helping

one's soul was denied. Many people who were alive during Mary's reign would not remember what the pre-Reformation Church was like; it is little wonder, therefore, that there was no mass reversion to the beliefs and practices of earlier decades. Too much had occurred for that to be possible. Perhaps the most important short-term effect of the Henrician and Edwardian Reformations was not the conversion of a few to Protestantism, but rather the break with tradition which had occurred. It was that which was felt by the majority, and it was that which the Marian Church was unable to make good. The authorities seem to have felt that a return to the old order could be achieved with ease once the traditional framework had been restored. However, many people had got out of the habit of traditional worship and were either unable or unwilling to return to those activities.

CHAPTER FIVE

RELIGION IN ESSEX IN THE 1560s

1] THE PARISH CHURCH

As was the case when the regime changed at earlier times, the accession of Elizabeth did not herald any sudden turn-around in the religious practices of Essex parish life. The government's wish initially to maintain the status quo was indicated by a proclamation issued in December 1558, which prohibited unlawful preaching and prescribed only those prayers, rites and ceremonies that were 'already used and by law received'. The sole exception was that the Lord's Prayer and the Creed were to be said in English.[1] Thus at Easter 1559 most parishes nation-wide celebrated in a traditional way. For example, Chelmsford provided a sepulchre and the watching of it as normal.[2] However, with the Elizabethan Settlement, followed by the injunctions of religion issued in the Summer of 1559, the parishes of England were once more required to remove the necessities of Catholic worship, and to provide instead for some of the needs of the Reformers.

Four sets of Essex churchwardens' accounts cover the earliest years of Elizabeth's reign in detail. These show that in the parishes concerned the work of destruction demanded by the Elizabethan regime was completed by 1562,

although the pressure for change came more from the royal visitors of 1559 than from actual legislation.[3] At Great Dunmow by 1562 at least two altars, and maybe three, had been removed, the rood had been burned, the roodloft dismantled, the painting where the rood had stood defaced and a man paid 'for fyllynge ye holes in the churche and ye holy watyr stoppes & for whyght lymynge'. In 1560 Haybridge's images and the altar were removed, the roodloft pulled down and whitewashing done.[4]

Similarly, altars and rood had been removed from the church of Chelmsford by July 1560, and soon after the work of taking down the roodloft was completed. By 1562 a glazier had been employed 'for defacyng of the glase windows accordyng to the quenes iniuncions'. At Harwich, Stephen Hewet was paid in September 1559 'for yt he dyd helpe carry ye gare owt of ye churche whan yt yt was burnt & also for yt he dyd breke ye rassedew yt do remayn'. In August 1560 John Hart and another man were paid for two and a half days work 'in pluckynge down of ye Roud lofte', and the job was completed in March the next year. Whether Harwich's delay in completing this task indicates a concern that yet another change in religious policy might occur requiring the restoration of the roodloft is unknown. However, the church was whitewashed in 1561 and on 6 November that year two men were paid 'for defassynge

of ye imayges callyd ye faynyd marrackells yt stand in ye chanssell/ vestre & churche wyndowes'.[5]

That which was removed and not destroyed was often sold, along with other church goods. Churchwardens from Chelmsford, Broomfield and Harwich all recorded the sales of their roodlofts, and in the churchwardens' accounts of the last of these parishes it was specified that some of the timber was to be used as firewood. Lead, church plate and bell metal were all sold, as were altar stones. While such activity continued throughout the decade - an altar stone was sold by Boreham's churchwardens in 1569-70, and a large sale of church linen and ornaments occurred in Great Dunmow between 1568-73 - by far the greatest activity took place during the first half of the 1560s. For example, all five parishes whose accounts are both complete and begin in or before 1563 record the sale of a chalice.[6]

The money which was forthcoming from these sales went some way to off-setting not only the expenses incurred by the removal of traditional decor, but also the cost of the necessities of Protestant worship which Elizabethan legislation demanded. Great Dunmow bought a communion book in the first year of Elizabeth's reign, but it was lost before Midsummer 1559. However, by March 1562 that church had in its possession a book of articles, one of

homilies, and Erasmus's Paraphrases, which were installed in the church for all to read, as required by the injunctions. Also purchased had been 'xxj chapiters of Jeremye for the byble', a copy of the Ten Commandments, and a communion cup. Further books of homilies and prayers were bought during the remaining years of the decade, as was a catechism by 1568.[7]

A similar story occurred elsewhere. In Chelmsford by 1560 a service book and communion table had been bought, and in the next two years so were a Bible, 'a parafrase upon the gospeles' and one upon the Epistles, 'ij psalteres and a psalme bocke', the Ten Commandments and a calendar of church festivals. Also provided were 'a pessock [hassock] for the parson to knele on at the comunyon tyme', while a man was paid 'for makyng a bord for the comandementes' so that they could hang in the church for all who were able to read. Once again, subsequent years saw further homily, prayer and communion books bought, including at the end of the decade 'a bocke of prayers agaynste the rebellyons', no doubt directed against the Northern Earls.[8]

The other remaining churchwardens' accounts reveal that each of the parishes concerned had purchased several Protestant books by 1570, in compliance with the government's demands. Bibles were bought by both Harwich

and Heybridge in 1560, as were the Paraphrases and a Book of Homilies in the former, and a service book in the latter. During the 1560s homily books were purchased by Broomfield and Wivenhoe churchwardens, and most of the parishes record the purchase, at one time or another, of prayer books, service books and psalters. Furthermore, the Ten Commandments were certainly to be found in both Wivenhoe and Heybridge, as was a catechism in Great Hallingbury.[9]

Thus parishes such as these once again acquiesced in changes in the religious situation imposed from above. This cooperation may indicate some popular support for the government's stance. However, conformity does not necessarily equate with enthusiasm for these alterations. As had happened in earlier decades and elsewhere, the removal of traditional decor, statues and images from the churches of Essex was performed by paid workmen, and this task took years, not days, weeks, or even months. Indeed, nationally the Elizabethan Reformation appears to have been both slower and less effective than Edward's was.[10] Furthermore, there is no evidence from Essex of the excessive zeal in destroying images which prompted the government to issue proclamations in 1560, 1561 and 1579 to dampen the ardour of iconoclasts.[11] As had been the case during the reigns of both Henry VIII and Edward VI, alterations to church decor under Elizabeth were

undertaken in an orderly fashion, overseen by parish officials.

However, as when religious alterations had occurred in earlier reigns, some parishes were not fully provided with the required equipment for worship as early as the authorities would have liked. Once again, the latter were both willing and able to apply the necessary pressure to provoke action. This coercion came mainly through visitations and via the church courts. Indeed, such institutions seem to have been effective in securing compliance with the authorities' desires nation-wide.[12]

Most Essex church court records of the 1560s come from the archdeaconry of Essex. These comprise a series of act books beginning in 1561, and a fair copy of the findings of a visitation of the archdeaconry which took place in June 1565. In addition, one act book from the beginning of the decade survives for the bishop of London's commissary in Essex and Hertfordshire, and the extant Elizabethan act books from the archdeaconry of Colchester begin in 1569. While such records report what was wrong and what had not been done, rather than highlighting what had been achieved, they clearly show that the condition of the Church in Essex during the first few years of Elizabeth's reign was far from ideal.

For example, many of the parish churches were in some degree of disrepair. The visitation of 1565 recorded that of the 145 parishes which comprised the archdeaconry of Essex, the naves and/or chancels in fifty-nine were in need of attention. Cases varied in seriousness, but an extreme case was in Chingford, where it was said: 'The arches of the Chancell wall are in decaye and so fallen downe'.[13]

Extant act books reveal that other churches were not being looked after properly. For example, the act book for the archdeaconry of Essex records that in 1570 the chancels of Cranham and Hadleigh, and the churches of Bowers Gifford and Ashingdon, were in decay.[14] That same year, in the north of the county, the church court for the archdeaconry of Colchester was informed that the church of Stanway was in disrepair and that the windows of the chancel at Tendring were broken. Furthermore, the churchwardens of All Saints, Colchester, were ordered by that court to ensure that their church's windows were repaired by Easter that year.[15] The lack of care of churches and chancels was to remain commonplace in visitation and church court records from both Essex and nationally during the rest of the sixteenth and the whole of the seventeenth centuries. Indeed, their condition drew comment from observers such as Philip Stubbes, who in

1593 described the condition of many English churches as 'lamentable'.[16]

The absence of evidence from Essex for earlier periods means it is not possible to establish for certain whether the decay of church buildings was a phenomenon dating from after the beginning of the English Reformation, or whether the lack of care had begun prior to any doctrinal changes. Furthermore, the historian must always be careful, for it is difficult to know precisely what was meant by 'decayed' and 'ruinous'. However, there are some indications that money to spend on church fabric began to decline only after the break with Rome. As the above chapters have shown, there were few cases of church building after the 1530s, which contrasts with earlier periods, when many parishes undertook large construction projects. There was also a marked decline in the percentage of testators who left a bequest to parish churches after 1530, a downward trend which picked up significantly only when the traditional order was briefly restored under Mary. While not being conclusive, such evidence suggests that the decline in investment in the churches of Essex began after the Henrician schism, and was linked to the government's promotion of Protestantism.

There are some cases of goods and money belonging to parish churches being withheld. For example, in Norton in

1564 William Slaue was reported for withholding vestments from the church, while in 1567 a Purleigh man was accused of detaining that parish's chalice. These men had probably seized these items when Catholicism had been suppressed, but it is not known whether they did so for personal gain or in the hope that they would be reused one day.[17] Earlier, an executor did not pay a 2s. bequest left to Stapleford Abbots church in 1561, while in 1563 an annual income of 52s., which had formerly supported an obit, was not paid to Chadwell church as it should have been.[18] Such cases do not indicate large-scale fraud, but they show that individuals were prepared to profit at the expense of the Church.

Some parishes managed to organise communal means of raising money for their churches in the 1560s. For example, in Boreham between 1565 and 1570 the churchwardens recorded the annual total of money collected from parishioners for church repairs. The reason for this collection is explained in the findings of the 1565 visitation, which said of Boreham: 'The churche ys in greate decaye so that xl li will not repaire the same'. Thus the parishioners were faced by a very severe need, and regardless of their positive response it is clear that the church had been allowed to fall into great disrepair for such measures to be necessary.[19]

Other parishes utilised other methods of communal support. Religious drama was performed in Braintree up to 1570, while in Chelmsford the church regularly received money from hiring out its wardrobe of play costumes until this was sold in 1576.[20] In Wivenhoe an ingenious way to increase parish income was found. In 1566 a shop was built in the churchyard:

> the whiche shopp was made and ordeyned by the said persones for that the proffits and yerelie rent of the same shuld alwais here after come to the onelie use of the churche of Wevynhoo aforesaid and no other ways.[21]

Thus not all parishes found it impossible to generate additional income when the need arose, even if the types of sources were severely restricted when compared to earlier periods.

The state of repair of the churches was not the only area of concern for the ecclesiastical courts. Throughout the 1560s many cases appear in Essex church court records of pressure being placed on parishes to provide communion cups and their covers. Furthermore, complaints about inadequate communion tables and pulpits were also made. All of these were items required by the 1559 injunctions.[22] For example, the following cases were recorded by the visitation of the archdeaconry of Essex in

1565: in Loughton, the pulpit was 'not sufficient', and neither were the ones in Stanford Rivers or Ashingdon; in Little Thurrock the communion table was not 'lawful', while in both Chiderditch and Stapleford Tawney they were not decent; the parishes of Aveley, Wennington, Norton and South Hanningfield all lacked covers for their communion tables; and Greenstead had no communion cup.[23]

The responsibility to provide items such as these lay with churchwardens. Thus in 1568 the churchwardens of Mucking were ordered by the court to get a cover for their communion cup, while in 1570 those of Barking were required to provide a communion cup itself.[24] And, as was the case with the failure to repair sufficiently the fabric of churches, the lack of decent Protestant equipment was not confined to the southern half of the county. In 1569 the churchwardens of Fordham, Fairstead and Ramsey lacked covers for their communion cups, while those of East Donyland and Holy Trinity, Colchester, lacked not only a cover but a cup itself.[25]

It seems that churchwardens usually responded to the church court's demands. For example, in 1567-8 the churchwardens of Great Hallingbury recorded in their accounts that they had produced their communion cup at a court. This item had doubtless been found wanting and the churchwardens were required to show that it now fulfilled

the necessary criteria. The churchwardens of Broomfield bought a cover for their communion cup in 1569, but also had to pay a fine of 12d. 'to the offycers for that we hade not the cover for the comunyon cupp by the daye appoynted'. It may be that similar pressure was applied on the churchwardens of Wivenhoe, for they also purchased a communion cup cover some time between 1568 and 1572.[26] However, the absence of cases such as these from later church court records suggests that from c.1570 church plate, at least, was provided in Essex churches as the law required.[27]

Bibles, homily books, psalters, calendars of church festivals, service books and the Paraphrases of Erasmus were also found wanting in some Essex parishes. Indeed, the failure to provide all the books required by the authorities was common throughout England.[28] An extreme case is that of South Hanningfield, where in 1569 the service book was improper, the Bible lacked three chapters, and the Paraphrases of Erasmus had been missing for over a year.[29] The visitation of 1565 was informed by the parish of Ramsden Bellhouse that the reason they lacked a copy of the Paraphrases was because a former curate had taken it when he had left.[30]

In total, the 1565 visitation of the 145 parishes of the archdeaconry of Essex found that thirteen did not

possess all the books they should, while in the rest of the decade a further fifteen parishes in that archdeaconry appeared before the church courts for not having books which were required. Furthermore, in 1566 the churchwardens of eight parishes were reported for not possessing a copy of the articles of religion. Thus many parishes in the southern half of Essex failed to comply with the government's requirements concerning books, and not all parishes put the situation right as quickly as they seemed to do when the lack of church plate was reported. For example, in 1565 it was recorded that Hadleigh did not possess a copy of the Paraphrases, but this volume was still reportedly lacking in 1570.[31] This may indicate that books were considered less important than other items.

2] THE CLERGY OF EARLY ELIZABETHAN ESSEX

The failure to provide the books required by the Elizabethan Settlement would have made it hard to bring the new doctrines to the people. This task was made more difficult in certain parishes by the quality of the local cleric. For example, many of those who served cures during the early part of Elizabeth's reign had gained their benefice under an earlier regime. The induction book for the archdeaconry of Essex records that between

1562 and 1570 only twenty-six new clerics were presented to livings, and all but one of those presentations occurred after 1565.[32] Thus the provision of the new doctrines was left initially to a clerical body who, on the whole, were not followers of that tradition.

Furthermore, some clerics did not set their parishioners a good example despite the requirement in the 1559 injunctions that 'they always do the things which appertain to honesty...and should be examples to the people to live well and Christianly'.[33] In many cases, the clergy came from the same background as their parishioners, and thus would have enjoyed similar interests and pastimes.[34] Occasionally, however, the pursuit of such activities went too far for the tastes of the parishioners. Accusations of fornication were made in the court of the archdeaconry of Essex between 1563 and 1567 against the rector of Fobbing, the vicar of Mayland and curates of both Woodham Walter and Leyton. In 1565 the visitation of that archdeaconry was informed that the parson of Cranham 'kepeth a suspecte woman in his house'. A couple of years earlier the court of the bishop of London's commissary in Essex and Hertfordshire had heard that the vicar of Braintree was the father of a bastard, while the vicar of Good Easter had contracted marriage with a widow, Alice Kellye, had had the banns read thrice, and had made her pregnant, yet still had not married her.

He was ordered to read to his congregation the homily on adultery the following Sunday and to marry the woman the Sunday following Trinity Sunday.[35]

Sexual laxity, however, was not the only moral failing amongst the clergy which might offend their flock. In 1563 the rector of Thundersley was accused 'that he plaiethe at cards and dyrce [dice] all the week longe'; this was in direct contravention of the seventh injunction of 1559.[36] The following year the vicar of Horndon was indicted 'for entysing neue seruants to playe for a shollder of mutton'. As punishment, he had to stand in the church, wearing his surplice and with a rod in his hand, 'confessange that he hathe don evyll in allurynge youth to play at table'; furthermore, he had to give 20d. to the poor.[37] That same year the rectors of Beauchamp Roding and Chignall St James were accused of being drunkards, a charge repeated against the latter cleric before the visitation in 1565, where it was said he was 'not mete to serue any cure'.[38]

Clerics did not appear only before ecclesiastical courts, however. For example, in 1568 the quarter sessions ordered the vicar of Thaxsted, Thomas Halydaye, to keep the peace towards a gentleman of that parish. In 1571 the rector of Sandon was indicted before the same court for being a common quarreller and barrator, as was

the rector of Wickham; the former was fined 4s. 4d., the latter 16d.. In the previous year the vicar of Lindsell had been fined 6d. for breaking into the close of a widow and stealing nine bushels of wheat worth 18s.. If this was a tithe dispute, as seems possible, it is clear that clerics were severely discouraged from taking the law into their own hands.[39] An intriguing case appeared before the Chelmsford assizes in 1566 when the rector of Twinstead, Richard Halywell, and his wife Anne were indicted. They were accused of being common barrators and of running a bawdy house in the town which was frequented by whores and people of ill repute. Alas, the verdict remains unknown.[40]

Thus some clerics certainly fell a long way short of the standards desired by parishioners. Colourful as cases such as these may be, however, it would be wrong to infer from them that the whole clerical body in Essex were bordering on immorality and/or illegality. Although the lack of records prevents any comparison with earlier periods, it is certain that some clerics had always acted in a way not worthy of their clerical standing. However, in the situation where the Church was seeking to promote a new religion amongst the masses such clerical failings became more important. It was no longer the case that these men were the transient custodians of a benefice within a Church which had existed for over 1,500 years;

what were needed now were enthusiasts for the new order, willing and able to bring the Word to the people. This being so, what was more lamentable for the Church in Essex in the 1560s were not the few cases of clerical misdemeanour, such as those cited above, but the failure of a large number of incumbents to minister to their flocks vigorously.

In 1563 the Privy Council ordered every archbishop and bishop in England to provide certain specific information as to the condition of their dioceses. The reply of Bishop Grindal of London is extant.[41] This records that there were 404 churches and chapels in Essex, of which sixty-seven were vacant: twenty-two in the archdeaconry of Essex, thirty-five in the archdeaconry of Colchester and ten in the archdeaconry of Middlesex. Furthermore, three parishes made no return, while several reported that they were served only by a curate. The deanery most poorly provided for was that of Colchester: ten of its sixteen churches and chapels were vacant, while the six remaining ones were served by only three clerics.[42] Thus the parish system, on which the dissemination of Protestantism in Elizabethan England relied, was poorly supplied in Essex in the early-1560s.

Two further indices of the failure of clerics to minister to their flocks show how the problem remained

acute in the South of the county - insufficient records mean that the analysis must be confined to the 145 parishes of the archdeaconry of Essex. In 1565 the visitation of that archdeaconry discovered that the incumbents of thirty-six parishes were either absent from their parish or were pluralists. In the rest of the decade, a further nine parishes reported to that archdeacon's court that their incumbent was non-resident. For example, the parson of Wickford was also parson of Runwell in Essex and held a London benefice too. In 1565 the parson of Little Warley, George Colborne, had been absent from that parish for five years, while the vicar of Hockley had visited his benefice only once since the accession of Elizabeth, six-and-a-half years earlier.[43]

However, even if an incumbent was resident it was not certain that he would serve the cure as he should. The injunctions of 1559 required beneficed clergy to deliver quarterly sermons on the casting aside of usurped papal power in England, while in monthly sermons congregations were to be exhorted to follow the path to salvation set out in the Scriptures, and to avoid works and superstitions which were devised by man's fantasies. When sermons were not preached on a Sunday, homilies were to be read. Furthermore, the injunctions of religion were to be read once a quarter.[44]

Provisions such as these were designed to indoctrinate the masses in the religion of the Settlement and their ultimate success was to be, it was hoped, through instilling a Protestant consciousness in the minds of church-goers by the regular repetition of forms which gradually became familiar.[45] However, in many Essex parishes these teachings were not provided in the early years of Elizabeth's reign. Forty-four parishes told the 1565 visitation that they lacked sufficient quarter sermons, while in the rest of the decade incumbents from a further twenty-three parishes were called before the court of the archdeaconry of Essex for failing to provide the minimum number of sermons required.

It is possible to doubt both that such preaching was an effective method of teaching and that the majority of the population desired to be taught thus. From the Protestant point of view, the preaching prescribed by the injunctions of 1559 was not the 'lively' kind which they desired for edification, while the amount of preaching required by the government was regarded as being inadequate to convert people to the new teachings.[46] As far as the laity were concerned, there was a popular dislike of long sermons, while many of them would not understand learned sermons even if they heard one.[47] For example, neither the parishes of Havering or Mundon seemed overly perplexed when they informed the 1565 visitation that they had no

minister resident but were served by a 'sufficyent reader', even though Protestants regarded such reading as being of little benefit.[48]

Furthermore, preaching on its own seems to have converted only a few people to Protestantism. Indeed, when cases of conversion are examined, this was often a private affair and achieved in a variety of ways, but especially through the study of the Bible. However, most Protestants regarded it as being impossible to be saved without the help of a preacher, while the absence of such provision denied some who might take the Protestant message to heart through sermons the opportunity of hearing the Word. Perhaps the Parable of the Seed best describes the Protestant attitude to preaching.[49]

The problem of providing sufficient preaching was one which could only be solved gradually, by the recruitment of suitable men into the ministry. Preachers were required to be licenced by the authorities, and to have at least a Masters degree.[50] The authorities were clearly wary of the influence that one whom they did not consider qualified to preach might have. For example, in 1564 a curate from Hawkwell was brought before a church court because of his erroneous interpretation of the articles of religion. The court ruled that henceforth he should desist from scriptural interpretation and restrict himself

to reading homilies.[51] Thus the expansion of preaching was inhibited by the desire of the government to oversee the personnel who would fulfil that role. The creation of a preaching ministry was bound to take time. Indeed, a survey of Essex in 1584 found that less than one in three incumbents was an adequate preacher.[52]

Professor Collinson has described the provision of a preaching ministry in Elizabethan and Jacobean England as being a four-stage affair. At first, parishes were served by occasional, itinerant preachers in what he calls the 'apostolic' stage. This was followed by the establishment of preaching in a number of centres, especially through 'prophesyings'. The success of this led to a preaching-ministry being established in a great number of towns and parishes, and finally preaching became a common feature of parish life throughout much of England.[53]

The beginnings of this process can be seen in Essex in the 1560s. For example, several parishes described the 'apostolic' stage of preaching to the 1565 visitation of the archdeaconry of Essex. In Wickford the four quarter sermons were supplied by Henry Wright, who was the pluralist parson of that parish and Runwell, and a Mr Bryce. Furthermore, Wright also preached two sermons in the parish of Downham that year, along with Bryce who preached one, while a further two sermons were provided by

a Mr Ankle; Bryce also preached in Dunton, Ramsden Crays and Ramsden Bellhouse. Similarly, in 1565 sermons were made in Stapleford Tawney, East Ham, Walthamstow, Mucking, Vange and North Weald by men who did not hold those benefices.[54]

While itinerant preaching such as this was the most likely way in which the Word was transmitted in early Elizabethan England, the second of Professor Collinson's developments can be seen elsewhere. In the 1560s the town corporation of Saffron Walden paid a cleric for providing church services on the days of each of the two annual fairs held in that town.[55] While it is not known whether this cleric preached or not, the town authorities clearly did not consider there to be any conflict between commercial and religious activities. Indeed, apparently they were keen to provide the Word for the large numbers of people attracted to these fairs.

In some parishes, however, the problem of a lack of preaching was compounded by the incumbents' failure to provide adequate church services. Complaints were made in 1565 that homilies were not read in Great Warley, Greenstead, Bradwell-juxta-Mare and Hockley.[56] Thus, in some parishes, even a minimal amount of Protestant teaching was not provided. In other parishes accusations were made that clerics were not diligent in providing

divine service itself. In Hadleigh the reason for this was ascribed to the fact that the parson served two benefices,[57] and in all the cases where there was a failure to read homilies the incumbent was absent.

Elsewhere, clerics did not have the excuse of their absence to explain their failed ministration. An example of this comes from Dunton in 1561 where the rector was reported for not only failing to preach, but also because he said the service so quickly the congregation could not hear him. As penance, he had to confess his fault and put 12d. into the poor box.[58] It is possible that this cleric had trouble adjusting from performing the sacrifice of the mass, with the congregation as spectators, to a service in which the congregation were active participants. Indeed, in 1564 the rectors of both Stock and Purleigh were convicted of mimicking the mass at communion time by turning their heads from the congregation, and nation-wide throughout the 1560s and 1570s church courts had to deal with many clergy who tried to counterfeit the mass when celebrating communion.[59]

In another type of case, the rector of Nevendon was convicted in 1567 of ministering the sacrament with 'lofbrede [loafbread] & cakes to the distarb & unquietnes of the parisheonars'. an offence he was made to confess from the pulpit the following Sunday after the reading of

the Gospel. The injunctions of 1559 had specified that the sacramental bread be 'common fine bread', round and plain, with no figure upon it, and was to be bigger and thicker than mass wafers had been.[60] This case shows that parishioners were not ready to receive normal bread at communion.

The cases cited above are in some ways pulling in opposite directions. In the first three the complaint was that parishioners were being excluded from religious services. By wishing to be a part of the service they were moving towards a Reformed stance. In the latter case, however, the desire was to keep the communion bread special. This kept the communion closer to the mass than ardent Protestants would have wished. Various explanations for these differing attitudes may be offered. On the one hand, it is possible that different communities were more or less conservative in their religious outlooks depending on a variety of influences. Thus it is not inconceivable that Nevendon was more conservative in 1567 than Dunton, Stock and Purleigh were when those cases were brought. Another explanation might be that those who brought these cases did not represent the majority opinion of the parish, and the feelings of most people regarding the quality of their ministers remains unknown. It is also possible that, because in all these cases the Elizabethan Settlement had been contravened, these

parishes simply wished to maintain the compromise of the Settlement. The truth will never be known for certain.

Other contraventions of the 1559 injunctions can be found. For example, clerics were required to provide religious services not only on Sundays and holy days, but also on Wednesdays and Fridays. These additional services were not provided in some parishes, such as Wennington, Chignall St James and Chadwell.[61] Another ceremony ordered by the injunctions was the Rogationtide perambulation. It is shown in Chapter One that such events dated back to the pre-Reformation era, and conflicts occurred over their association with that earlier period, although the injunctions made clear they were to be only an act of thanksgiving and to mark the parish boundaries.[62] For example, the 1565 visitation was informed that John Goose from West Tilbury objected to the perambulation there, saying: 'Is there an ydoll here to be worshipped that you haue a drinckinge here?'.[63]

While Goose appears to have been a layman, though a Protestant - he was charged at the same time with teaching the parish youth to read without a licence - it was mainly the clergy who found themselves in trouble for failing to perform the perambulation properly. Clerical failure came in two kinds. First there were those who wore their surplices on the perambulation and thus gave

the impression it was a religious procession, as it had been in earlier times. Cases of clergy acting in this traditional way were reported from Staplaford Abbots and Chignall St James in 1567 and from Chignall Smealy in 1569.[64] At the other extreme, in 1569 the parsons of West Horndon, South Benfleet and Fobbing were reported for not going on the perambulation at all.[65] It is possible that this failure reflects clerical negligence - in the latter two parishes sermons were lacking too. However, these clerics may have felt that the perambulation was a superstitious activity with which it was unfitting to be involved.

Catechising was a means of teaching the doctrines of the Church of England, although it has been asserted that the catechism in the prayer book contained nothing that was specifically Protestant.[66] Instruction by the local minister was meant to occur on every holy day and every other Sunday, and although requirements varied slightly from diocese to diocese, many bishops' injunctions from the 1560s onwards cited six as being the age at which catechising should begin, while it was accepted that those over twenty could not be made to attend the classes.[67]

However, catechising did not occur in several Essex parishes. For example, in 1565 sixteen parishes reported that the youth were not being taught their catechism.

Often the reason for this failure seems to have been clerical negligence. Sometimes, however, it was the laity who were at fault. In South Ockendon it was stated that the parishioners were slack in sending their children to be taught, while in 1564 a church court heard that children from seven families in Theydon Garnon had not been sent to be catechised. Perhaps the most accurate picture is provided by Ingatestone in 1565, where it was said: 'The youthe hath not bin instructed in the catachisme, neyther haue the parishners sent them to be enstructed'.[68]

It is true that where a parson failed to teach the catechism he was failing to perform his duty. However, it is unlikely that in parishes where no catechism was taught the people were longing for such instruction. Widespread resentment towards catechism classes was expressed throughout the country well into the seventeenth century and the reason for this hostility may have been its actual aim which was, as Professor Collinson says, 'to implant a religion consisting of patterns of printed words in heads which had little use for words of this kind and which must have found it very difficult to convert the words into authentic and meaningful experience'.[69]

As few parishioners were refused communion for not knowing their catechism it is possible that most, however

grudgingly, did actually learn it. Indeed, the prayer book catechism was only about a thousand words long and consisted of the Creed, the Ten Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, so most could learn it if they needed to.[70] However, in some cases it is possible that communicants were not examined, for it is known that in 1565 the parson of Buttsbury and in 1567 the parson of Chignall St James did not examine parents or godparents before baptisms, nor brides before weddings.[71] Thus, as was the case with preaching, catechising could not generate a country of devout Protestants.

Clerical misdemeanours, however, were not confined to the failure to provide adequate ministration, for there is some evidence of Protestant nonconformity amongst Essex clergymen. In 1569 a curate from Romford and a cleric from Barking were brought before the church court for not wearing surplices.[72] The previous year Thomas Halidaye, the vicar of Thaxted, was indicted before the court of assize for a similar offence.[73] The injunctions of 1559 had stated that clerics were to wear those surplices which had been sanctioned in the latter years of Edward VI's reign.[74] Yet, despite the assertion in the injunctions that to wear surplices did not 'attribute any holiness or special worthiness to the said garments', some ardently Protestant clergy wished to be rid of all such special

clothing, which gave rise to the 'Vestments Controversy' of the 1560s.[75]

That these clerics faced accusations over this issue implies that there was a desire to enforce conformity, although it is unclear whether the emphasis came from parishioners or the authorities. The former is plausible, because there is evidence throughout the country during the Elizabethan period of layman demanding that the rubrics of the prayer book be followed, while the wearing a surplice probably appealed to the majority of church-goers, who were not convinced Protestants.[76] It is possible, however, that not all those indicted had committed their offence through religious motives. For example, the curate of Romford explained his actions thus:

> that he weareth not it [i.e. the surplice] bycause it was warm in morning & an old rotten on, & hath promised to were or if there were a good on.

This curate may merely have been making excuses, of course. Even if he was telling the truth, however, this case, along with the others, shows that the wish to quash all signs of nonconformity, no matter how minor, was strong.

While the cases cited above tend to paint a bleak picture of the condition of the Church in the 1560s, it must be remembered that there was another side to the story too. It is true that reports of insufficient sermons were made from about a third of the parishes in the archdeaconry of Essex, yet this implies that in the other two-thirds sermons were provided. Similarly, while many cases of clerical immorality or negligence can be gleaned from church court records, the majority of incumbents were not brought to account in this way. That is not to say that those not charged with misconduct were model examples of what a Church of England minister should be. However, the possibility that such clerics offended neither their parishioners nor the Elizabethan religious legislation must be considered, even if it is impossible to prove. Unrealistic expectations of what the clerical body should have been, or indeed of what the laity wanted from their clergy, must be tempered by recognising the turmoil of the previous three decades.

3] THE SURVIVAL OF CONSERVATISM

As is shown above, the Church in Essex in the 1560s often failed to comply with the minimum requirements of the Elizabethan Settlement. This, however, was not restricted to a failure to provide what the Protestants felt was

necessary, for there was some survival from the Catholic past, too.

Evidence of the survival of conservative activities was openly recorded in the churchwardens' accounts of Broomfield. A paschal light was provided there in 1563, and the next year 8d. was paid 'for the ringginge of hallomas nighte'.[77] A paschal light was a traditional provision which seems not to have continued in other Essex parishes under Elizabeth, while such ringing of bells was for the repose of souls in Purgatory and was opposed by Protestants. Indeed, between 1563 and 1569 people from eleven other Essex parishes appeared before church courts because similar peals had been rung. It has been shown in earlier chapters that Purgatory had had a strong influence over the consciences of generations of Essex church-goers, and for some this influence clearly remained. No doubt the man from Little Warley who, in 1564, was ordered to put 2s. in the poor box for ringing a peel for his dead child would have regarded it as a small price to pay for the deceased's soul to be at rest.[78]

Furthermore, some traditional Church equipment and fittings survived into the 1560s and beyond. Roodlofts, or part of them, were reported as still standing in Dunton in 1563 and in Loughton, Bulphan, West Horndon and Lambourne in 1565.[79] The one in West Horndon was

dismantled only in 1572, while in 1569 roodlofts were discovered in both Woodford and Ingrave; furthermore, the roodloft in Bobbingworth was removed only that year. During the two decades after 1570 occasional orders to remove roodlofts were made by the Church authorities in Essex, while in North Weald one has survived to the present day.[80]

While the roodloft was the item parishes seem most likely to have tried to preserve, or, at least, it was the item whose survival was the most frequently reported, other traditional furnishings remained. In 1564 the images in the glass of South Weald church had not been defaced, while in Kelvedon the communion table was used where the altar had previously stood.[81] Although the injunctions of 1559 stated that the communion table should be kept where the altar had been, they also said that at time of divine service the table was to be moved to a more central part of the church.[82] The 1565 visitation discovered that in Corringham murals remained on the walls where the high altar had stood, that vestments had not been defaced in South Ockendon, that the beam for a light before the image of St Mary remained in Little Warley church, that imagery remained in the church windows of Stanford Rivers, and that in the parish of St Peter's, Maldon, an altar remained in the leper hospital 'to the

offence of the people'. Another altar was discovered in the chapel at Shenfield in 1568.[83]

After the religious toing and froing of the previous few decades, the survival of traditional fittings might reflect the pragmatic response of preserving expensive items which would be needed in the future if Catholicism was restored, rather than an active desire for a return of Catholic worship to occur. For example, roodlofts were items in which parishes had invested much money and pride. Thus many parishes nation-wide required pressure from the local bishop to remove these and other items of traditional decor, and even then they responded only slowly.[84] Likewise, it is unknown whether the retention of undefaced Catholic books in Little Henny, Shelley, Hatfield Broadoak, Great Baddow, Chapel and Chingford was solely in case they would be required in the future for official worship, or whether they were used continually by Catholics under the Protestant regime. However, in the case of books such a distinction might be more difficult to sustain, even if the initial reason for retaining them was only for their preservation.[85]

Even if such cases do not indicate Catholic leanings, they show that some people doubted that the Elizabethan Settlement was permanent. However, in some cases the preservation of traditional goods was clearly due to

doctrinal convictions. For example, West Horndon was the home of Lord Mordaunt, an ardent Catholic, and his influence no doubt helps explain why that parish was so slow in pulling down its roodloft.[86] Mordaunt was also implicated in the survival of Ingrave's roodloft. When appearing before the archdeacon's court in 1569 Ingrave's churchwarden claimed that he had informed the lord that the roodloft was still standing, to which Mordaunt had said 'that an officiall shold send sum to pull it down'. Mordaunt, however, clearly did not arrange for this to be done, and the churchwarden was called to account for this failure.[87]

The beam for the light before St Mary in Little Warley remained because 'Mr Tyrrell will not suffer it to be pulled doune', while the altar in Maldon was maintained by Edward Harvey of Langford. Nothing more is known of Harvey, but the Tyrrells were to become a well-known recusant family in Essex during the latter half of the sixteenth century.[88] In another case, in 1561 John Rayllde attempted to prevent the defacing of the images in Buttsbury church's windows, claiming 'that yt [i.e. the images] was noo harme'.[89] Although this last attempt at preservation seems to have failed, all three men clearly wished to maintain some of the traditional religion, in spite of the schism and the Settlement.

Furthermore, mass was certainly celebrated in Essex in the early 1560s. A London cleric was indicted before the Queen's Bench for having said private mass in Borley in April 1561, attended by Sir Edward Waldegrave, his wife and several gentlemen from the surrounding area. That same court heard a similar charge that year made against Sir Thomas Wharton, who had mass said in his home, New Hall, Boreham, by the local cleric. He, too, was accompanied by other local worthies.[90]

The investigation into these events shows that the maintenance of Catholic worship had some organisation even at this early stage. The examination of John Devon, a priest, revealed that he had witnessed mass being celebrated at both these knights' houses, as well as at other places in the county, and that at these locations he had seen various Catholic books and ornaments.[91] Indeed, an inventory of Catholic items found in a chamber in Wharton's house reveals that these people were well provided with the necessities of Catholic worship. Items discovered included a rood, candlesticks, an altar painted with images, vestments, a chalice and a pyx. Many of these items had been brought by Devon from Pentlow church, which was some distance from Boreham.[92] Thus mass was celebrated in several Essex centres, more than one priest was involved, and these were not always local clerics.

While there is no evidence that people of more humble social standing were able to attend the Catholic mass had they wanted to, there was some scope for making their feelings known about the new religious settlement. The absence of William Brooman from Chipping Ongar church in 1561 was ascribed by his accusers to suspected popery.[93] In 1563 the churchwardens of both Mucking and Stapleford Abbots were reported for refusing to buy bread and wine for the communion. Indeed, in the former, the churchwardens not only thus prevented the parishioners from receiving communion, but also mocked them, no doubt for wanting to receive.[94] Furthermore, in the previous section it was shown that some clerics harked back to the mass at communion time.

The very appearance of cases such as these in church court records may indicate that the conservatism they represent was no longer widespread. For instance, the parishioners who reported these individuals were clearly not admirers of Catholicism. However, it is clear that the Elizabethan Settlement did not bring to an end all signs of traditional religious beliefs and practices in Essex. Indeed, in the early 1560s there are signs of hostility to the new developments. In 1561 a labourer from Chelmsford, Robert Taylor, was accused of saying: 'That service that the Quene hadd and did use in her Chappell was but palterye'.[95] He was found not guilty,

but this case indicates that opinions such as these were in circulation.

A unique but intriguing case comes from Barking and appeared before the court of the archdeacon of Essex in 1564. Two witnesses said in their depositions that Laurance Shokdale, a tailor, had asserted that the vicar preached the Gospel falsely and administered the communion erroneously. Furthermore, Shokdale claimed he received communion once a year 'for a color & not otherwyse'. Shokdale's hostility to the new teachings, however, became clearer when one of the witnesses, Richard Adams, sent home for one of the two psalm books which he possessed. Shokdale responded 'that the sallme bokes were noughte and yt the cronycles wolde confounde them'. Furthermore, Shokdale asserted that the Second Commandment, which forbids the making of graven images, was a false invention of man's. It is unknown in which chronicles Shokdale placed so much faith, but it seems that he trusted writings which had been available for many years, rather than the newly available Scriptures. Furthermore, it is ironic that he should dismiss the Protestants' hostility to images as being based on an invention of man's. But perhaps the most striking feature of this case is the confusion and division which the religious changes had clearly caused.[96]

Signs of Catholic opposition to the new order were rare in Essex in the 1560s, however, and it seems that the general trend was away from traditional beliefs. The traditional order had been under attack since the 1530s and that alone would have dented people's loyalty to it. Thus the traditional religious milieu was fundamentally altered. Indeed, in the 1560s some people regarded an accusation of 'superstitious' religious practices as being slanderous. In 1563 a case of defamation was brought by Henry Hoye of Mucking against Thomas Bayerd and Christopher Eaton. The former had said that Hoye and another man had in their custody a velvet cope and other church goods. Whether he was implying that this was an act of embezzlement or that Hoye was retaining these items for covert religious practices is not clear. The words of Eaton which upset Hoye are clearer in their implications, however:

> Eaton dyd saye that he the sayed Hoye dyd mak a shryen [shrine] of the coppar crosse and dyd worshippe it as a god.[97]

Eaton's accusation was an exaggerated view of the use by Catholics of images, and Hoye's wish to clear his name does not necessarily mean he was opposed to the old order. What it shows, however, is that an accusation like this

was regarded as being detrimental to the standing of the one thus slandered.

Some people in Essex did remain convinced Catholics, although few found themselves in trouble prior to the act of 1581 which brought in a fine of £20 per month for absentees from church, and was aimed primarily at Catholics.[98] One example of adherence to the old faith came from Finchingfield in 1577 and centred on two brothers, George and William Binkes. They spoke in favour of transubstantiation, confession and images, and condemned Protestant preachers. Indeed, a wife from Finchingfield complained that due to the Binkes' persuasions her husband no longer attended sermons. Other Essex people expressed the idyllic belief in the late-1570s and 1580s that 'It was a merry world when the service was used in the Latin tongue', but that that Golden Age had abruptly ceased after schism with Rome.[99]

From 1581 onwards long and fairly regular lists of Essex recusants were produced.[100] However, a letter from John Aylmer, bishop of London, addressed to the sheriff and justices of Essex in December 1587 stated:

> I have been given to understand from some of you that sundry persons in several parishes within the County of Essex have been presented unto my Archdeacons' officers

> for recusancy, of purpose that their recusancy might have been certified by me to you: and that notwithstanding by my said Archdeacons' officers that the persons presented have been omitted out of my certificate and so have escaped unpunished.[101]

Thus it appears that some Catholics were not drawn to the attention of the authorities, so their numbers cannot be accurately assessed. However, Catholicism certainly survived in Elizabethan Essex, as is clearly shown by various articles in The Essex Recusant.[102] Catholicism was practiced by only a minority, but it did survive.

4] THE LAITY AND RELIGION IN THE 1560s

A swift decline of the remnants of traditional piety expressed in wills occurred between Elizabeth's accession and 1570. Traditional formulae and objects of giving, which had begun to recover under Mary, received a fatal blow after her sister ascended to the throne, so that by the early years of Elizabeth's reign all obvious traces of Catholic piety had been removed from these documents. At the same time there was a growth in expressions of Protestant belief. However, by 1570 only a minority of people chose to declare their adherence to the Reformed doctrines in their last will and testament.[103]

During the first three years of Elizabeth's reign traditional preambles disappeared from those wills looked at. Five percent of wills used them between her accession and 1561, but no further examples have been found after that date. Such formulae were clearly considered inadvisable under the new regime, as is indicated by the will of John Grynslad, a waterman from Rainham, written in March 1559, and that of Edward Mallte of Margaretting written in September 1560. Both wills originally began with traditional formulae, but the references to St Mary and the company of Heaven were crossed out, leaving the soul bequeathed to God alone.[104] It is impossible to know whether these alterations were done at the behest of the testators, or were the result of some other pressure. Clearly, however, by this date a traditional formula was considered an inappropriate way with which to begin a will.

As had been the case under both her brother and sister, the most frequently used preambles during the first dozen years of Elizabeth's era bequeathed the testator's soul to God alone. Between the queen's accession and the end of 1565 nearly sixty percent of wills began in this way; from 1566 to 1570 the percentage fell to just under half of the wills examined. Once more the indication is that at a time of religious change and confusion the majority of testators chose a non-committal preamble. How far neutral

preambles were used to mask an inclination to traditional beliefs, however, is impossible to know. No doubt the answer varied from testator to testator.

What is certain is that the first few years of Elizabeth's reign saw a profound growth in the percentage of wills which began with a Protestant preamble. Prior to Elizabeth's accession the highest percentage of Protestant preambles - thirteen percent - was recorded under Edward VI. In the first three years of Elizabeth's reign, however, seventeen percent of wills employed such phraseology. Furthermore, the figure rose to twenty-six percent between 1562 and 1565, and had reached thirty-five percent between 1566 and 1570. Indeed, in this last period it seems that Protestant preambles were making headway at the expense of the neutral option.

The increased use of Protestant preambles may indicate that the doctrines of the Reformers were beginning to take hold amongst a wider section of the community, if only in as much as it was Reformed phraseology which was turned to as death approached and wills had to be written. However, even if this was the case, only one in three testators and/or will-writers used the Reformed option in the second half of the 1560s. This suggests that by that date the new teachings had not yet gained dominance even amongst the higher echelons of the community, who were most likely

to write wills. While all but a handful of testators couched their wills in Christian terminology, in only a minority of cases can any clear doctrinal significance be ascribed to the phraseology used. Thus, in the twelve years after the Elizabethan Settlement, Protestantism failed to establish itself as the norm.

During the 1560s there were also will preambles which differed from the three major types of formulae. Mostly, these were similar in style to infrequently used preambles of the 1540s and 1550s. As the decade progressed, however, the use of these other preambles declined, and most of such preambles left the soul to 'God etc.'. As was suggested in the previous chapter, such preambles were probably shorthand versions of the originals which the scribe did not bother to copy out in full.

Thus the indication is that testators were less confused as the decade progressed, and by its end most chose either a neutral or a Protestant preamble. This suggests that the religious situation was more stable, yet Protestant sentiments were not those to which most people instinctively turned. Rather, most people used a preamble which revealed little about their religious beliefs. The old order had been destroyed, but apparently no dominant new order had developed to take its place.

As had been the case under Edward, in the 1560s testators expressed less concern for the fate of their bodies than when official religion was of a traditional ilk. Thus there was an increase in the number of wills which made no mention of the burial or did not specify where the final resting place should be. Furthermore, there was a decline in the percentage of testators who made special arrangements for their funerals. Indeed, some testators, such as William Baker, a husbandman from Great Chishall, specified in their wills that they were to be buried without pomp, thus openly rejecting the great ceremony of a traditional Catholic funeral which many in the past had desired.[105] Thus, once again, a move away from wanting traditional practices can be seen. For some, this was clearly done on doctrinal grounds. Others, however, no doubt omitted specific arrangements simply because they were no longer considered to be either necessary or respectable. Indeed, the possibility that all that occurred was a stylistic change must be considered - far fewer people expressed the wish to be buried within their church, but in practice such arrangements did continue.

Another form of bequest which ceased to be made in the early years of Elizabeth's reign was for intercession on behalf of the testator's soul. During the first three years of this reign a mere one percent of wills sought

such aid, and no examples of testators expressing the desire for help for their souls have been found after 1561. Such a collapse is not surprising given the Protestants' open hostility to what they considered superstitious fantasies, and considering the willingness of earlier regimes to confiscate endowments made for such purposes. However, while wills reflect this official opposition to such institutions, they do not necessarily indicate that all people had lost the desire for such aid. Bequests for intercession had shown a marked increase under Mary, while witness is borne to the continued wish to help the souls of the departed by those cases of people ringing church bells for the dead which are mentioned above. Thus the collapse of requests for intercession reflects a recognition of the religious situation in England, but does not necessarily indicate a wholesale rejection of Catholic eschatology.

As had occurred on previous occasions when the Church in England adopted a Protestant stance, fewer testators felt the need to leave something in case they had left any tithes outstanding. Fifteen percent of wills had contained this insurance at the end of Mary's reign, but the figure fell to three percent during the first three years that Elizabeth wore the crown, falling to one percent between 1562 and 1570. Thus it is possible that the Church after the Settlement did not evoke fear amongst

the laity that they would be damned had they inadvertently left their tithes unpaid.

Bequests for parish church maintenance initially fell under Elizabeth from occurring in fifteen percent of wills at the end of Mary's reign to three percent between 1559 and 1561. This figure began to pick up after 1561, however, to between six and seven and a half percent. An explanation of this recovery may be that, as the decade wore on, people were more certain that the religious situation was here to stay and so were more willing to invest in the fabric of their parish churches. Furthermore, the declining state of many Essex churches described in Section One may have prompted some testators to respond to an acute need. However, the general impression from Essex wills supports Professor Collinson's assertion that, nationally, 'Elizabethans of all classes invested in the building and furnishing of more comfortable houses for themselves, rather than in enriching the house of God'.[106]

There are a few cases from the 1560s of testators making bequests which indicate they were devout Protestants. Both John Bonande of Canewdon and Clement Hardye of Braintree bequeathed their Bibles - in the case of Hardye, together with a psalter.[107] The importance of reading in Protestant culture is further indicated in

Bonande's will. He left his Bible to his son, John, and also requested that John be kept at school for five more years so that he learnt to read and write.

The bequest of religious books would have had only a limited effect, restricted to close associates of the deceased. However, other testators tried to effect a greater influence by leaving money to fund sermons. Thus in 1564 William Broke of Great Ilford left 40s. for four sermons to be made within two years. A more substantial bequest was made by Thomas Rayman of Vange four years later. He left £8 for 'Masters Goosse, Allve, Wardall & Bryise' to preach eight sermons in his parish church, while Mr. Ockelye of Great Burstead was left 10s., provided he preached at Rayman's funeral.[108]

However, the type of bequest which saw the greatest increase in the first dozen years of Elizabeth's reign was to charity, particularly to the poor box. About a third of testators remembered the poor, and an eighth chose to make their donation via the poor box. The injunctions of 1559 had ordered that such boxes be provided in each parish church. Furthermore, clerics were told to exhort their parishioners to give to the poor, 'specially when men make their testaments', for 'to relieve the poor is a true worshipping of God required earnestly upon pain of everlasting damnation'; such giving was in contrast to the

'blind devotions' of the Catholic past.[109] Thus it is clear that the authorities sanctioned a certain amount of pressure on testators concerning the content of their wills.

Professor Jordan has argued that from the late Tudor period there developed a new sense of moral and social responsibility derived from a number of sources. These included local administrations being taught responsibility by the Tudor monarchs, gentry and merchants assuming responsibility for public welfare, and Calvinism being sublimated into a sensitive social conscience which was secular in its aspirations and fruits.[110] Whether this new sense of responsibility, or the pressure from clerics, explains the increase in charitable donations is uncertain, however. Furthermore, some testators perhaps saw charity as the only 'work' left for them to invest in to help save their souls, even if such a belief was not openly expressed in the will. Indeed, the belief that those who lived well would be saved remained common, even amongst regular church-goers, into the seventeenth century, despite Protestant teaching to the contrary.[111]

Between the accession of Elizabeth and 1570, however, three out of five testators whose wills have been examined did not make any religious or charitable bequests. Thus the majority of testators either did not wish, or did not

feel obliged, to express their religious convictions through financial generosity. This secularisation of bequests may indicate a growing secularisation of society in general, as the old order was destroyed, while the new only partially filled the gap which was left. Indeed, Professor Jordan asserts that there was a 'momentous shift from men's primarily religious preoccupations to the secular concerns that have moulded the thoughts and institutions of the past three centuries', and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries he claims there was a broadening spectrum of social and cultural aspirations which went further than the Church was prepared to go.[112] In the more immediate situation of early Elizabethan Essex, however, the decline in such bequests may reflect the fact that there were fewer areas in which a testator could invest, or perhaps it was indicative of a continued sense of uncertainty and insecurity in religious matters.

However, while it would be a grave error to suggest that Essex in the 1560s was an irreligious place, church court records contain examples of absence from church, refusal to receive communion, and general profanity, which suggest that many lay people were not God-fearing individuals. Forty-nine of the 145 parishes in the archdeaconry of Essex reported to the 1565 visitation that some parishioners had either failed to attend church or had not communicated. For example, Chigwell reported that

sixteen people had not received at Easter, High Ongar reported eleven people for non-attendance, while amongst the eight people from South Shoebury who had not received that year, one was the parson's wife.[113]

While most of the other parishes in 1565 reported only one or two individuals each, some admitted that the problems were more acute. For example, both North Weald and South Weald informed the visitation that nobody in those parishes had received communion the required three times that year, while in Wennington it was the youth of the parish who were reported to be reluctant to receive.[114] The injunctions of 1559 required that each parish appoint 'three or four discreet men which tender God's glory and His true religion' in order to monitor church attendance, and this task seems to have invariably fallen upon the churchwardens.[115] However, in South Weald monitoring proved to be impossible, for the churchwardens complained that they did not know the names of those who did not attend church because the parish was so large.[116]

It is unclear whether all people were reported each time they were absent or abstained, or if only the most consistent and/or unruly defaulters were brought to the attention of the authorities. The 1559 injunctions stated that the monitors should call on all those who were absent without a good reason and, 'after due monition, if they

amend not, they shall denounce them to the ordinary'.[117] Thus the indication is that only the obstinate found themselves in trouble. Furthermore, some of those who were charged with not attending church certainly seem to have led immoral lives. For example, Elizabeth Williams of Hornchurch was excommunicated in 1569 when it was reported that:

> she dothe not come to the cnurche & will not pay ye forfyture of xijd, she hathe not receyued sins she com to ye parishe. she hathe a child but ye father unknowen.[118]

It could be argued that people who were prone to living in a way not sanctioned by Christian teaching were unlikely to want to attend religious services, while they would not be swayed by the obligation to attend in order to keep up appearances. It is possible that Elizabeth Williams was in such a situation. However, the report of her misdemeanours makes it clear that Elizabeth was a relative newcomer to the parish. Thus, being an outsider, and probably without kin in the town, she may have been more likely to be reported for her errors, especially as she had produced a bastard which the parish was liable to support. The church court was being used to punish someone who had offended the mores of the parish community.

Similarly, the youth of Wennington were not at the centre of the community. Hence they may have not felt obliged to receive as often as they should, or as other parishioners felt it proper for them to do so. Furthermore, even though their misdemeanour was reported, this may have been done solely as a warning to bring them back into line. The visitation was informed of the offence, but the culprits were not named. Youths were traditionally seen as preferring pursuits other than attending church, and it was especially feared that if allowed they would give free rein to their sexual desires and make matches without the influence of elders.[119]

Thus, once again, the church court can be seen as a tool to ensure acceptable behaviour was maintained. Perhaps the most revealing statement is one made by the hard pressed officials of South Weald. Although they did not know everyone who should attend church, they were at pains to emphasise that 'they knowe none to be obstinatly absente'. Probably it was only the disruptive offenders whose behaviour it was felt necessary to check. In 1565 John Vincent, a butcher from Prittlewell, was accused of not receiving for a year. However, it was also claimed that he 'dyd misuse the vicar and did opprobriouslye miscall him', while he was referred to as an 'ungodlay man' who had 'tempted dyvers women to lewdness'.[120] No

doubt it was this behaviour which led to him being reported.

People who failed to attend church occupied themselves in a variety of ways. Some clearly felt that their time was better spent in the fields. For example, a couple from Romford were reported in 1563 for working on Sundays and holy days, the visitation of 1565 was told that John Gosnall from Chigwell carried a load in his cart on Christmas Eve and was absent from church on two Sundays, while in 1567 Giles Grey of Barking was excommunicated for working and washing skins on the Sabbath. Records from the North of Essex mention similar offences being committed in 1569 in both Great Holland and Saffron Walden.[121]

The 1559 injunctions did not forbid work on days of worship. Such days were to be celebrated and kept 'according to God's holy will and pleasure', but clerics were told to instruct their parishioners that at time of harvest they could gather the crops after having heard the common prayer. Indeed, those who 'for any scrupulosity or grudge of conscience' did 'superstitiously abstain from working upon those days' were to be informed 'that then they should grievously offend and displease God'.[122] However, in these cases, it is probable either that it was

not harvest-time - Christmas Eve certainly was not - or that the accused had not attended church first.

Others, however, found the temptation of leisure too attractive to forsake, and after a week's work it is understandable that some preferred to spend their day of rest elsewhere than in church.[123] The 1559 injunctions had ordered that no inn or alehouse was to sell food or drink at the time of divine service.[124] This injunction was clearly ignored by some, for it was a common complaint nation-wide in the later sixteenth century and beyond that taverns were full while churches remained empty.[125] For example, reports of victuals being sold come from Chipping Ongar and Fryerning in 1561, Rainham in 1565, Barking in 1566 and Leyton in 1567, and whilst the victuallers were the ones invariably reported, they must have had customers for them to transgress thus.[126] Indeed, while the Rainham alehouse-keeper who was reported in 1565, Richard Jacketts, admitted his fault and gave 4d. to the poor box, the problem in this parish did not end. In 1567 John Wall and his wife were reported for a similar offence, compounded by the accusation that they knowingly lodged unmarried couples together.[127]

Drinking was not the only way in which people who did not attend church spent their time. Four men from Walthamstow were reported in 1564 for bowling during

service time, and in 1569 another quartet, this time from Langdon Hills, were reported for a similar offence.[128] In 1565 the visitation of the archdeaconry of Essex was informed that a couple from Shenfield kept evil rule at service time and that a man named Mynta, from the same parish, 'daunceth the morres' instead of worshipping God.[129] John Gosnall of Chigwell had already been in trouble with the ecclesiastical authorities for absence from church and working on Christmas Eve when, in 1567, he was convicted:

> for kepinge his dores open & company at his hous at mornyng praier at evenyng prayer likewise daunsinge all seruis tyme.[130]

He was ordered to admit his fault before the parish in church the following Sunday. It is possible that Gosnall's generally disruptive influence, as exhibited in 1567, was what prompted the earlier action to be taken against him, rather than simply his working being the cause of offence.

In some cases, the Church was seen as providing criminal elements with the opportunity for easy pickings. Thefts from churches occurred in East Donyland in 1569 and in Wennington in 1569, while in 1563 the quarter sessions heard that when a respectable household were attending

church as they should, one Charles Hamond attempted to break into the house and was only spotted by chance by a servant.[131] Hamond no doubt chose the time when he was least likely to be caught to attempt his crime. Others showed their contempt for religion by blaspheming, and men from both Barking and West Tilbury were indicted before the archdeacon of Essex's court in 1568 for this offence.[132]

Thus there was a plethora of activities which were in conflict with the rules of the Church and respectable society. Possibly there was a section of society who did not attend church, and instead comprised an alternative, profane culture, centred on the alehouse and the village green; such a polarisation between alehouse and church becomes more apparent in later decades.[133] Those who did not attend church were not necessarily criminals like Hamond, but they were not respectable members of the community. If this was the situation, it is possible that absentees were reported only when they offended respectability.

However, not all those who attended church conducted themselves in a manner expected of them. A man from Chipping Ongar said that the reason he walked around during church services was 'by cause of his infyrmytie that he can not sytte', yet he still had to pay a fine of

1d..[134] However, no such mitigating circumstances were offered by the numerous people accused of talking, arguing, being unruly, and even brawling in the churches or churchyards of various Essex parishes during the 1560s.[135] Disputes in churches were nothing new - an acrimonious case from Barking in the pre-Reformation period was recorded in Chapter One - and this was a problem which had prompted an earlier government to act; under Edward VI a law was passed which forbad the drawing of weapons in churches or churchyards.[136] However, disturbances such as these continued to be common throughout the country, and remained so into the next century. In part, they no doubt reflected boredom on the part of the parishioners involved with the services they were expected to endure.[137]

Cases such as these undoubtedly disturbed the peace of the community, and for this reason action was taken against the culprits. Furthermore, the reconciliation of disputes remained one of a parish minister's prime functions in the eyes of the laity, and the parishes of Ashingdon and Buttsbury were quick to report their parsons when, in 1565 and 1566 respectively, they administered the communion to people who were out of charity with their neighbours.[138] Thus the parish church clearly retained its position as the parish meeting place, for the majority of the community at least, while the Church still oversaw

the passage of parishioners' lives. Indeed, the requirement first made in 1538 that each parish maintain registers of births, marriages and deaths was reconfirmed in the 1559 injunctions.[139]

It was because some apparent Protestants acted in a way which undermined the central role of the parish in communal life that they were brought before the church courts. Some people were accused of attending church services other than in their own parish church. Occasionally a genuine error may have been made; when Thomas Goldinge of Rainham was accused of being absent from church, he claimed he was from the neighbouring parish of Aveley, although it was shown that he was, indeed, from Rainham.[140] Other absences, such as those of John Asher from Ruttsbury church and Walter Woulbert from Barking church, clearly were not a mistake, although in the case of Asher the court ruled that his absence was lawful.[141] Protestants desired edifying sermons, and they had no qualms about attending services which were to their liking in other parishes, although the 1559 injunctions restricted mobility between parishes to 'the occasion of some extraordinary sermon in some parish of the same town'.[142] However, to the majority of the community, absenting oneself from services in the local church in order to attend them in another parish was tantamount to

schism, which explains why those who went 'gadding' were reported by their neighbours.[143]

There were also cases of hostility towards individual clerics which may indicate that the laymen involved were Protestants who did not consider their local minister worthy of his position. For example, William Dunne of Langdon Hills refused to receive communion from his parson, while men from Stanford Rivers, Dedham, Boxted and Langham all refused to have their children baptised by their local clerics.[144] In all these cases the people concerned may have been objecting to poor clerical standards, but the effect was to break up parish unity, which required all in the parish to attend the same church services and receive the sacraments from the same minister. Once more, such activities would have been seen as leading to schism.

There clearly were some active Protestants in Essex in the early years of Elizabeth's reign, as is shown both by wills and by cases which came before the church courts. However, they were in the minority, which is not surprising. Protestantism was an austere creed and it was a literate creed. It was a religion of the written word and not of pictures. Thus there was little to attract the illiterate; indeed, it has been asserted that 'There is no reason to believe that an intellectually demanding and

morally rigorous religion transmitted by the written and spoken word had a broad, natural appeal'.[145] Furthermore, Protestants were conscious of being a minority of 'known men' and were comfortable with that situation for, despite the trials of this world, they were certain that the rewards of the next life were theirs.[146]

The great majority of the population were not Protestants in 1570. Indeed, few would ever become true doctrinal Protestants. Christopher Haigh has argued that there developed in Elizabethan England parish anglicans: ''anglicans', because of their stress on the Prayer Book and insistence that 'there is a good edifying in those prayers and homilies as in any that the preacher can make', and 'parish' because of their emphasis on the harmony and vitality of the village unit, at play and at worship'.[147] The foundations of this development can be seen in Essex in the first dozen years of the reign of Elizabeth through the cases which came before the church courts. These institutions were used to enforce moral and religious conformity, and only worked with the cooperation of the lay community. People whose activities were too radical were indicted, along with those who maintained traditional beliefs and those who were profane. In Essex in the 1560s the laity generally seem to have upheld Christian values, but they were neither Catholics or Protestants.

CHAPTER SIX

RELIGIOUS DRAMA AND COMMUNAL FESTIVALS IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ESSEX

The preceding Chapters have shown that the traditional way of religious life, which the majority of Essex people had followed prior to the 1530s, was gradually brought to an end by the years of Reformation, but that Protestantism failed to attract all but a minority of adherents. For the majority, there was a definite shift away from the religious practices of the past, which had demanded overt actions such as the maintenance of an active system of intercession, or the repair and beautification of parish churches. Most people passively accepted the changes imposed from above, but they also withdrew much active support from their local church. Whether this was due to unease at a time of religious uncertainty, or the cessation of many of those activities which actively involved the laity, or reflected resentment generated by the changes, remains unclear, however.

A similar move away from traditional practices can be seen when religious drama and the Church's involvement with communal festivals are examined. Religious life in Essex had long had a strong dramatic tradition. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the nuns of Barking abbey celebrated Innocents' Day and Easter Sunday with

dramatic interludes incorporated into the liturgy, while in the fourteenth or fifteenth century a Latin play was performed in St James's, Colchester, in order to raise funds for the parish church. At least thirteen places in fifteenth-century Essex staged plays of some kind, including Maldon and Saffron Walden. In the following century a further forty-six places did likewise.[1] However, by the late-1570s all church organised folk-festivals and dramatic activities had ended. It was left to itinerant professional companies to perform plays in this county. If folk-festivals survived they did so solely in secular hands.

1] THE VARIETY OF ACTIVITIES

The fullest accounts of religious drama and communal festivities during the first half of the sixteenth century come primarily from the churchwardens' accounts of Great Dunmow, together with records from Heybridge, Maldon and Braintree. Such activities clearly were not confined to these places, however. The records show that such events were held in a large number of places, and that the various types of activities occurred mainly between Christmas and mid-July.

These activities may be split into two groups. First there was religious drama, which was popular for a number of interlinked reasons. On one level, vernacular drama was the people's Bible, providing the laity with access to the Scriptures not only through the performance, but also by the months of preparation and rehearsal. Such events also had a liturgical character, for they mirrored the ecclesiastical year and its sequence of feasts, and contained the interpretative voice of the Church. Furthermore, plays were a celebration, both through the stories which they told and by the performance itself, which was the culmination of much work. Indeed, the production of a play could be considered a good work, and attendance at a performance was often linked with the remission of time to be spent in Purgatory.[2]

The work which went into productions was another important aspect of such events. The staging of plays required cooperation by the whole community, and it has been claimed that 'no other occasion in the life of that community could compare with them in promoting unity of purpose, self-fulfilment, and egalitarianism in the sight of the Almighty, notwithstanding the obvious distinctions of birth, wealth, education and skill dividing each member of that community from his fellows'.[3] Such productions also enabled the community to define itself in relation to the outside world. Primarily, an image of communal piety

was presented, but a spectacular production also bore witness to the wealth of a community. Furthermore, by attracting an extramural audience into the parish, both relations with the surrounding area were improved and commercial activity was briefly increased. All in all, such productions had the secular benefits of helping to cement the sense of community, whilst also enhancing its prestige and honour in the eyes of others.[4]

Alongside the Christian calendar there was also a series of folk-festivals, such as Lords of Misrule and May Day celebrations. Many of these originated from the pre-Christian period, and they were primarily associated with nature, the climate and the seasons. With the advent of Christianity, such festivals were often incorporated into the Christian calendar, and they tended to congregate around Christmas and Easter. Churches not only accepted these festivals, but nurtured them as a source of income; for the laity such events provided further occasions for communal celebrations and festivities.[5]

An idea of the rich vein of events which were to be found comes from the churchwardens' accounts of Great Dunmow. These reveal that between 1527 and 1542 there were ten years when a Lord of Misrule brought money into the church's coffers, while on four occasions a celebration on Plough Monday, which occurred early in

January, did likewise. The most regular events in this parish, however, were on May Day, which was mentioned in seventeen years' accounts up to 1545, and activity on Corpus Christi Day, described variously as a feast or a play, which occurred on sixteen occasions between 1527 and 1543. In the one year during that period, when no Corpus Christi celebration is mentioned, there is recorded a 'gamyng', which was possibly a sporting event akin to silver games; a similar event occurred in 1542, in which year Corpus Christi celebrations were recorded too. There is also a reference to 'dansynge mony' in 1526-7 and to occasional events on St Nicholas's day. Finally, in 1547 there is an entry headed 'At our playe', which describes the organisation of silver games. However, the time of year when these took place is not stated.[6]

i] Corpus Christi Celebrations

The feast of Corpus Christi was authorized by a papal bull in 1264, but the pope who issued it, Urban IV, died soon afterwards, and the bull was repromulgated and the feast secured only in 1311.[7] In 1318 Corpus Christi was celebrated at St Peter's monastery in Gloucester, and by the 1330s it was widely observed throughout England.[8] As was shown in Chapter One, during the fifteenth century Corpus Christi Day was celebrated annually in Saffron Walden with a procession.

The feast was dedicated to the eucharist and occurred some time between 23 May and 24 June, depending on Easter. On Corpus Christi Day, first a mass took place, after which the congregation formed a procession and the consecrated host was ceremonially carried around the town or parish. The procession comprised clergy and laity, was clearly defined by order of precedence, and reflected the hierarchy of local society. After the procession was completed and the host deposited in a church, the religious side of the occasion had been concluded, and there followed feasting and other secular celebrations.[9]

The records suggest that Corpus Christi celebrations in Great Dunmow included some sort of dramatic performance. Of the sixteen years in which an event on Corpus Christi Day is recorded, on four occasions the celebrations are called a 'play'. In eight of the years the event is described as a feast, while on three occasions there is record of money as 'Resseyuid at corpus tyme', which suggests some public spectacle. In the accounts of 1528 there is no record of any profit made by the church from Corpus Christi celebrations, but the payments for that year included 4d. for 'lyne & pakthrede & whepcorde whan Pernell made the pagantes on Corpuscryti daye'.[10] It is possible that this payment is connected to the events of the previous year, for the same churchwardens held office

in both 1527 and 1528. Alternatively, the celebrations that year simply may not have generated a profit.

The pageant described by the seventeenth-century Chester antiquarian, David Rogers, which was 'a highe place made like ahowse with ij rowmes beinge open on ye tope the lower rowme they apparrelled & dressed them selues, and in the higher roume they played, and they stoode vpon 6 wheeles', is no longer regarded as typical. Rather, the description of the Norwich grocers' pageant, which used a four-wheeled cart with a roof, is regarded as a more accurate generalisation.[11] Such 'floats' could be used either as a stage for a play or as part of a procession. Even in this latter role, however, dramatic depictions of biblical incidents would have occurred on them, even if a fully-fledged play did not. For example, in some places pageants are known to have taken the form of a mute show, while in others they stopped at predetermined stations in order to present brief speeches and dramatic actions. In a few towns elaborate play cycles developed.[12]

Some form of acting was probably involved in the Corpus Christi Day celebrations in Great Dunmow. However, there are few indications of the nature of that day's celebrations. In 1536, 1538 and 1543 minstrels were hired, but it is unclear whether they provided music for a

play, during the procession, or entertained at the feast.[13] Allusions to an actual play occur in only three entries. In 1532-3 the churchwardens paid 2s. 8d. for 'a playe boke of corpus xpi paianntes', for the word 'pageant' described not only the stage on which a performance occurred, but also the performance itself.[14] This certainly suggests that they intended to put on scripted performances in the future, but might equally imply that prior to that date an actual play had not featured in the town's Corpus Christi celebrations. Furthermore, it is possible that the pageants which this book contained were speeches or short dramatic interludes to be included in the Corpus Christi procession, rather than a Corpus Christi play as such. In 1538 2s. was paid 'to Ayer of Chelmysford for playeres garmentes & for fecchyng of the same', while three years later 'the players at owre Corpus Christi' were paid 6s. 8d..[15] This last payment may have been to reimburse costs incurred by or lost wages of local amateurs; on the other hand, a few professional interluders may have been recruited in order to enhance the performance.[16]

Thus the records from Great Dunmow, whilst suggesting that some form of dramatic performance did occur, provide little detailed evidence for this. It is possible that the Corpus Christi celebrations did not have an established format but varied from year to year. There is

very little evidence that Great Dunmow annually staged a Corpus Christi play, however. True, the parish did purchase a play book, but in the two years when a play seems most likely to have occurred the parish had to hire costumes on the first occasion and pay actors to perform on the second. If there was a play, this may have been organised by bodies other than the parish - guilds were particularly associated with Corpus Christi drama elsewhere.[17] However, there is no evidence of this in Great Dunmow's extant records, and on the one occasion when pageants used as stages are mentioned the parish paid for them. Likewise, it was the parish which bought the play book and which kept accounts for the events on that day.

One feature of the accounts of Corpus Christi celebrations in Great Dunmow are lists of places which contributed towards this event, and eleven such lists are recorded. The first comes from 1531, and the number of places that contributed each year varied between two in 1536 and sixteen in 1532. In total, twenty-two places, together with Great Dunmow itself, contributed at one time or another to Corpus Christi celebrations in that town.[18] Dr. Mapham suggests that these contributions indicate 'that the players travelled with the play to villages within a day's journey'.[19] This interpretation is probably wrong, however, for it would mean that in most

years over ten parishes were visited, which would have been an arduous task. A more likely explanation is that the various parishes listed helped to fund the celebration of Corpus Christi Day in Great Dunmow itself.

Such cooperation occurred between various places in East Anglia at this time. A play about St George was presented at Bassingbourne, near Cambridge, in 1511 with the support of twenty-seven local villages. Similarly, the Suffolk parish of Blighborough was responsible for festivities supported by the financial contributions of surrounding parishes, while in Heybridge, Essex, in 1530 twenty-three parishes contributed a total of £5 17s. 11d. to produce a play in that town.[20] Thus Great Dunmow would not have been the only town to organise festivities with the aid of the surrounding area.

Most of the costs incurred by Great Dunmow's Corpus Christi celebrations were concerned with the organisation of refreshments. For example, mutton, lamb, spices and honey were all purchased over the years, while payments were made to those who either cooked them or brewed beer. In both 1538 and 1542 receipts from the sale of bread and ale are recorded, but the amount of other foodstuff which was bought was not enough for a communal feast.[21] Rather, it is likely that this catering was either for those who

helped to organise the day's celebrations, or was for local dignitaries.[22]

Thus Corpus Christi Day in Great Dunmow was probably celebrated by a procession followed by a feast, and was organised by the parish church aided by contributions from surrounding parishes. The procession probably contained 'pageants' on which short dramatic interludes were performed, but it seems unlikely that the dramatic element was any more complex than that. Indeed, a feast for local dignitaries may have been the culmination of the event, rather than any dramatic performance. Corpus Christi Day was clearly an important festival in Great Dunmow, but it was not solely a dramatic event.

ii] Religious Plays

Although Great Dunmow may not have put on a Corpus Christi play, other towns in Essex did choose to express their communal devotion through religious drama. The funding of a play at Heybridge in 1530, with the cooperation of surrounding parishes, has been mentioned above. On that occasion neither the nature of the play nor the time of the year when it was performed are specified. However, two years later Heybridge put on another play, and this has left more detailed accounts.[23]

This later play was performed on the Sunday before Whitsun and was clearly an occasion for feasting as well; indeed, it is possible that the play coincided with a Whitsun church ale.[24] Seven kilderkins of double beer and nine of single beer were brewed, while Godday's wife received 1s. 4d. 'for good alle'.[25] This outlay was richly rewarded, for the accounts recorded that £7 10s. 2½d. was 'rasayved at the daye of owr dry[nkyn]g', a total which may reflect a willingness to pay more for ale when the profits were intended for a good cause, such as the local church.[26] Beef, calves, sheep, lambs, cheese and cereal were all either donated or bought, and what was left after the event was sold. The cooks were paid 1s., 'she that turned the spitt' received 8d., and the 'basteter' was paid 4d. for basting the meat as it cooked.[27]

The subject of this play is not indicated, as is frequently the case with records of drama from Essex and throughout England. The reason for this is that scripts dealt with doctrinal matters and therefore the Church claimed absolute authority over them and their preparation. However, the extant records from Essex are those of the civil authorities, who were concerned with all matters pertaining to the staging of the play rather than the scripts. Thus payments for the preparation of the stage and auditorium are recorded, along with all the

other costs incurred. Likewise, the profits received are also recorded. However, there was no reason why these accounts should mention the subject-matter of the performance.[28]

A payment of 13s. 4d. was made 'to the pagentt players', while another 'pageyntt player' received 1s. 'for hys rewarde'. Whether these were professionals, or amateurs whose acting had caused financial disadvantage, is once again unclear. However, the actors and their three helpers received food and drink, for which Godday's wife was paid 4d.. Furthermore, a man was paid 6d. 'for baryng of the boke'. Rather than simply being a prompter, he would have been actually on the stage during the performance, reading the whole script as a reminder to the actors.[29]

Some indication of the scenery provided is given: gold foil was bought, a tabernacle was gilded, and a coat of arms was painted. Other items which were bought included five pairs of gloves and a 'gret lathe'. Whilst the former were no doubt intended to be part of costumes, it has been suggested that the latter may have been used as a spear.[30]

A minstrel was paid 10d., a tabor player named Colben received 2d., and 'Hoowe, that played the folle' was given

1s. 8d..[31] Whether they were involved in the play, or provided entertainment at the feast, is not known. However, a suggestion regarding Hoowe's role occurs in accounts from Bungay, Suffolk, where a fool was hired 'for his pastime before the play and after the play both days' in that town.[32] All in all, the production of this play in Heybridge was a great success, for a profit of £7 10s. was generated for the church.

Religious drama was performed in Braintree, too. In 1523 a play about St Swithin was performed in the church; this raised £3 13s. 7½d. net, after the deduction of £3 1s. 4d. costs. Two years later a play about St Andrew occurred on the Sunday before Relic Sunday (the Sunday after 7 July). This production cost £4 9s. 9d., but it brought the church an even greater profit of £3 19s. 8d.. In 1534 a 'play of Placy Dacy als [alias] St Ewe Stacy' was produced, the subject of which was St Eustace, also called St Placidus. The profits from this production went towards building the 'upper part of the church & South isle'. Once again the costs had increased, this time to £6 13s. 7½d.. But the income had risen even more, so the balance which went towards the building project was £8 2s. 8½d..[33]

All we know about the Braintree plays is that they were staged in the church itself, that the subjects were

saints' lives, and that these productions brought sizable sums into the coffers of the parish church. Whether the productions were performed by local amateurs, or with the aid of professionals, is unknown. Similarly, there is no record of any script or where it came from; neither do we know about the staging of the production, or how the play was funded. The only other mention of a play in the Braintree records before the late-1560s was in 1529 and simply reads: 'A play in Halsted church'. There are no further details, but it is possible that Braintree contributed to a production staged in Halstead, similar to the contributions made by surrounding parishes to the play in Haybridge in 1530, and for Corpus Christi Day celebrations in Great Dunmow.[34]

The other town which has left detailed records of religious drama from the first half of the sixteenth century is Maldon. Here the production of dramatic activities was administered not by the church but by the municipal authorities. This may have been because the civil authorities were in a better position to organise communal efforts in a town which contained more than one parish, but the prestige and honour of staging such activities, together with the commercial benefits, no doubt influenced the town authorities too. The earliest records of drama in Maldon date from the 1440s, and they

continue to appear until 1635, in which year a travelling company was paid not to show its play.

Four stages in the development of drama in Maldon have been identified. First, in the fifteenth century troupes from surrounding villages were encouraged to perform in the town. This was followed by the town itself managing dramatic productions, after which the authorities employed a professional producer who paid the chamberlains the profit generated. Finally, native plays were discontinued and only travelling companies performed in the town, until they too were discouraged.[35] The sixteenth-century records which will be examined come from the third stage of this development.

On most of these occasions drama in Maldon was indicated merely by the profit received by the chamberlains, which appeared in their annual accounts. However, there is extant from 1540 a separate sheet which details the accounts of that year's play.[36] The play was performed on Relic Sunday and was funded mainly by money received by the chamberlains from named individuals. However, 6s. was gathered at Great Dunmow by the vicar, while 8s. 8d. was received from the inhabitants of Chelmsford, indicating once again that the funding of such activities was not confined to the place where it occurred. In total, £7 1s. 9½d. was gathered; it is

possible that this money was donated by the men or towns named, but more probably it derived from from the sale of tickets for the production, possibly in advance.[37]

The 1540 play included incidents from the New Testament, for amongst the items bought were 'ij calvesskynnes for hym that pleid John Baptyst', while money was spent for the 'dyinge of Crists cote'. Soldiers, too, were portrayed, for a smith received 2s. for cleaning and mending two 'harnesses' [suits of armour], while bread and drinks were provided 'for theme that bere harneis when the play was shewede'. Furthermore, minstrels were employed, as were 'morresdawncers'. However, it is unclear if they were incorporated into the play itself or whether they performed separately.[38]

Wood, nails and other materials were purchased to make a stage, and eight men were employed for between two and fifteen days to construct it. A painter was brought in from Chelmsford and various materials for his use, such as 'goldfoyle', 'rede lede' and 'yelowe oker' were bought. The professional manager whom the chamberlains employed was one 'Felstede of Londone'; he received £1 5s. 4d. for his labours, and he and an assistant were boarded for seven days.[39]

Food and drink were provided on both Saturday and Sunday, costing 2s. 5d. on the former and 3s. on the latter. While this possibly means the play was performed twice, a more likely explanation is that there was a dress rehearsal on the Saturday, which was perhaps watched by members of the corporation and others with a vested interest in the production, followed by the public performance of the play the next day.[40] The cost of the food provided indicates that only a limited number of people were fed - no doubt only those who were closely involved with the play itself. Such meals, after both rehearsals and actual performances, were common, and those which followed the performance often included honoured guests, which may explain why more money was spent on Sunday's provisions than on Saturday's.[41]

While the meal was restricted to those directly involved with the play, drink was more widely available. Mistress Peter was paid 6s. 8d. for four kilderkins of double beer and 5s. 4d. for a similar amount of 'other bere', while John Brewer's wife received 5d. for drink and the widow Wyckhm was paid 2s. 8d. for four pots of ale. How many attended the play is not known, but Thomas Wed was paid 5s. for 1,500 liveries, which may have served as entrance tickets. The sum of the charges was £6 8s. 9½d., so the production made a profit of 13s..[42]

iii] May Day

Communal festivities were not confined to religious celebrations. It has already been mentioned that a variety of communal festivals were regularly celebrated in Great Dunmow, and it is to that parish that we will now return. One regular feature of Great Dunmow's churchwardens' accounts is the income which was received from May Day celebrations. Usually only the profit gained by the church is recorded, but in 1538, 1539 and 1543 more details are given. Most of these payments dealt with the provision of food and drink. Ingredients, such as meat, eggs, pepper and honey, were bought, as was beer; those who undertook the brewing or cooking were paid for their labours.[43]

Little more is revealed about the precise nature of the activities, but it seems that money for the church was gathered from those who attended the festival and that food and drink was sold. In 1538 the churchwardens paid minstrels 6d., but this is the only indication of what entertainments were actually provided.[44] Additionally, in four years payments were made by the churchwardens towards the Mays of neighbouring parishes of High Easter, Lindsell, Great Canfield and Easton.[45] While it is not explained why these parishes were supported in certain years, it is clear, once again, that parish festivals were

not merely dependent upon the generosity of that single community.

That the church of Great Dunmow received an income from festivities held on May Day, as had the church of Saffron Walden in the fifteenth century, reflects the coming to terms of the Church with this folk-festival. Church incomes from such a source were common during the later Middle Ages, as is shown by various churchwardens' accounts from East Anglia, Shropshire, Somerset, Surrey and Kent. Indeed, in Abingdon, Berkshire, by 1445 the organisation of the May was the responsibility of the guild of Holy Cross.[46]

However, there was also an innate conflict between Christianity and the customs of the heathen past, and this is clearly indicated by May Day festivities. Primarily, May Day was a festival of unmarried young people and the customs associated with it both celebrated and actively encouraged sexual licence. Dances were held and it was widely assumed that when the young men and women went into the woods on the night before May Day to gather flowers and a maypole for the festivities of the next day, their interests were not restricted to the flora.[47] Thus it is not surprising that some churchmen, both before and after the Reformation, were hostile to this festival.

iv] Christmas

Another time of the year when parish churches were involved with and profited from communal festivities was in the period around Christmas. One common activity then was the selection of a Lord of Misrule. For example, between 1529 and 1542 a Lord of Misrule is mentioned in ten sets of churchwardens' accounts from Great Dunmow. On most of these occasions only the profit generated for the church by his activities is recorded. However, in 1532 2s. 2d. was spent 'for leverys at Crystmas for ye Lorde', while one Newton, from Writtle, was paid 1s. 8d. 'for garments at Crystmas'. Further liveries were bought in 1538 and, also in that year, a minstrel was employed and a woman paid for brewing beer. In addition, John Melborn received 2s. 'in reward for playing the Lord att Crystmas', while John Parker was paid 1s. 'for playing the foole'.[48]

Apparently some sort of uniform or costume was worn by the Lord of Misrule and his men, at least in Great Dunmow. That the Lord had a following is suggested because liveries [plural] were purchased by the churchwardens. Furthermore, in 1531 a Lord of Misrule and his company are mentioned in records from Braintree.[49] A further indication of some of the Lord of Misrule's activities are revealed by events at Harwich in the mid-1530s. One of

the articles delivered against the curate there, Thomas Corthop, began:

> Item the xxvj of Decembre being Seint Stevyns daye the yong men of the Towne of harwyche after an old usage and yerely custom cam into the Churche when evensong was don with mynstrell to solas the parisshe and to bryng youth ffrom dyce cards and alle other Games of Ryot there entendyng by the advise of the hedds of this Towne to chose them a lord of misrule for the Cristmas tyme as it is called as they had don in tymes past.

That such festivities were not universally admired is shown by the curate's reaction to this event. He argued with the young men and then took the pipe from the minstrel and hit him on the head with it, before throwing it to the ground and stamping on it. Furthermore, the next day Corthop preached 'howe the Children of Israhell did com dauncyng and pypyng in the honor of their Idolls and aplied the same unto his parisshens'. Not surprisingly, such a condemnation drew a sharp response from the parishioners, for they claimed that they 'cam neither to daunce before Idolls nor to give them any honor but they cam to eschewe vice and encrease vertue'.[50]

The Lord of Misrule seems to have been a youthful figure. However, the parish youth were apparently not at

the church service which preceded the choice of the Lord of Misrule, for part of the function of the minstrel was to attract them from their pastimes and into the church prior to his selection. This in itself anticipates the misrule which was to follow, for authority was to pass to one whose time was spent in recreation rather than worshipping God. The role of the minstrel was not only to gather the parishioners and entertain them, however, for he also acted as an overture, heralding the selection of the Lord of Misrule, and thus created the sense of a special occasion.

Although the Lord of Misrule was chosen from amongst the young men of the town, this occurred with the advice of the town's hierarchy. Indeed, the man chosen to play the Lord would quite possibly have been someone who, in time, was expected to become one of the 'hedds of this Towne'. In Great Dunmow the identity of the man who played the Lord of Misrule was occasionally given, and those thus named invariably attained parish office at a later date, which suggests that they came from the community's higher reaches. For example, in 1529 John Foster was the Lord of Misrule, but on 21 October 1531 he was elected to the more responsible post of churchwarden. Similarly, John Melborn, who received 2s. for being the Lord of Misrule in 1538, became a churchwarden in 1551.[51]

The choice of Lords of Misrule from amongst potential future holders of high office can been seen elsewhere in England. For example, in 1517 Coventry's Lord of Misrule was one of the civic sergeants, which also meant he was a member of the Corpus Christi guild. Membership of that guild 'seems to have been strongly biased to the less aged office-holders, a characteristic which was underlined by the admission of dependent young offspring of the city's elite'. In mid-career the successful citizen transferred from the Corpus Christi guild to the guild of Holy Trinity, which was the senior fraternity in the city and was 'dominated by the ageing elite of the city - certainly the aldermen and probably the more elderly ancients of at least the wealthiest crafts'.[52]

What, then, was the function of the Lord of Misrule? It is clear that he did not simply oversee a period of uncontrolled licence, and nor was the period of his governance merely a time of entertainment and parish fund-raising. Rather, as Charles Phythian-Adams has pointed out in his study of Late Medieval Coventry, 'he was Lord not of unruliness and licence...but of mis-rule or misgovernment'. The Lord of Misrule heralded a symbolic, festive overturning of the status quo, and he ruled at a time when the natural order of things was temporarily inverted. Misrule replaced the 'good rule' that was the norm, and in so doing his rule may have acted as 'a means

for the subordinates to purge their resentments and to compensate for their frustrations'. Furthermore, the Lord of Misrule channelled activities at a time of traditional licence in a way which the authorities would not find too objectionable, for the man who was the Lord of Misrule had a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Therefore, the limited, controlled occasion of misrule may indeed have helped to support the social order as it stood, and it served this function not only in civic centres but in great men's households too.[53]

Another folk-festival during the weeks after Christmas which the Church both accepted and utilised occurred on Plough Monday, which was the second Monday after Epiphany. In 1522 the churchwardens of Heybridge recorded that 1s. 3d. was 'receyved of the gadryng of the white plowe'. Similarly, in Great Dunmow a 'Ploughfeast' was recorded in 1527, 1538, 1539 and 1541, although on the last two occasions the profits were recorded jointly with the income gathered by the Lord of Misrule. While the Great Dunmow accounts used the word 'feast', it seems this is in the sense of a festival and does not indicate that a sumptuous meal was involved.[54]

Money gathered at this time was often used to fund a plough light in the church, which was burnt to bring blessing upon the tillage; such lights were common in

arable districts of East Anglia and the East Midlands, and ones were maintained in Braintree and Walthamstow. On Plough Monday the parish youth would have dragged a plough about the town, whilst performing some type of dance, such as a morris or a sword dance. Money was collected from door-to-door, and those who did not contribute ran the risk of the plough being used by the collectors on their property.[55]

There were other festivals which might be celebrated during the period around Christmas, too. For example, in both 1535 and 1536 the churchwardens of Great Dunmow received money on St Nicholas's day, the sum being 3s. 4d. on each occasion. The latter entry states that the money was 'received of the busshop', which may indicate that a Boy Bishop was a part of the festivities that year.[56] The practice of selecting Boy Bishops, who represented a form of social inversion similar to that associated with the Lord of Misrule, is known to have occurred in sixteenth-century Essex; in 1552 a 'myter for Saynt Nycholas' clerks' was recorded amongst the property of South Ockendon church.[57] Furthermore, children certainly played an active role in Great Dunmow during the Christmas festivities. For example, in 1540 5d. was 'pade to the chylderne at Crystmas for playing'. There is no indication of what the children actually did, but it is

possible that they put on a performance associated with Innocents' Day or such like.[58]

An idea of the activities of Boy Bishops can be gained from the royal proclamation of 1541 which called for their abolition. This stated that:

> upon St Nicholas, St Catherine, St Clement, Holy Innocents, and such like, children be strangely decked and apparelled to counterfeit priests, bishops, and women, and so be led with songs and dances from house to house, blessing the people and gathering of money, and boys do sing mass and preach in the pulpit.[59]

In Great Dunmow the two years in which money was received on St Nicholas's Day were ones in which no Lord of Misrule is recorded. Therefore, it is possible that this parish's authorities considered that one case of social inversion a year was ample; as has been shown by Professor Wickham, these two characters had many similarities.[60] The reason why, in the mid-1530s, the established form of parodying the status quo was briefly replaced is not certain. One possible explanation is that no one was found to play the Lord of Misrule in those years; therefore the church, which was having financial problems, sought an alternative fund-raising event.[61]

However, the money gathered by the Lord of Misrule varied between just over 38s. in 1540 and 53s. 4d. in 1529, which was far in excess of the 3s. 4d. collected on St Nicholas's Day. This suggests that the Lord of Misrule was more popular in Great Dunmow than was the Boy Bishop, and might explain why the churchwardens paid those who played the Lord of Misrule and the fool in 1538.; in spite of that outlay, the net profit was much greater. The need to pay the Lord and the fool may indicate a growing hostility to these characters in some quarters, however; for example, the Protestant regime of Edward VI crushed a whole plethora of popular customs such as this.[62] What is certain is that this church ceased to sponsor all such festivals during the 1540s.

v] Silver Games

The churchwardens accounts of Great Dunmow contain two references to a 'gamyng', one in 1539 and the other in 1542. On the first of these occasions a profit of four marks twenty-one pence is recorded, while the latter event made 16s. 7d.. Whilst no further details are given of the second 'gamyng', in 1539 John Barker received 20d. 'for a staffe of syluer to the gamyng', while 10d. was 'payd to Rychard Sered & others for ther paynes atthe gamyng'. Sered and his colleagues may have been rewarded for gathering donations at this event, but the use to which

the silver staff was put is unclear. However, it is possible that these 'gamyngs' were traditional silver games and that the silver staff was used in some capacity at these, possibly as a prize.[63] Furthermore, silver games were certainly held in Great Dunmow in 1547.

There is scant evidence from elsewhere in England regarding the nature of silver games, and Professor Collinson has asserted: 'Silver games are likely to remain one of the more inaccessible diversions of Merrie England'. Humphrey Roberts, the minister of King's Langley, Hertfordshire, complained in 1572 that:

> the people will not stick to go x or xii miles upon the Saboth day in the morning unto a Silver game, ther to spend the time in vanyties all day long.

From Roberts's comments, Professor Collinson has concluded that silver games were: 'fund-raising and charitable events which were publicly licensed and widely advertised, with 'banners hanged upon poles, with drommes and instrumentes played before them, proclayming this their vanities to be holden upon Sonday in such a towne''.[64]

The churchwardens' accounts of Great Dunmow, however, reveal more about the nature of silver games. The entries from 1547 were headed 'At our playe' and begin with a list

of a number of different activities, together with the profits received from each. First, 8s. 7d. was received from 'the games of of [sic] the byasshope of Seynte Andrewes and for the shotyng at the same'. The 'games of our runnyng' made 2s. 1d. and 'the games at the leapyng' brought in 2s.. Four shillings were received 'for the games of the Tavell and the shotyng of the same', while 'the games of the pryke and shotyng of the same' generated £1 0s. 10d.. Finally, there was a version of this last game for younger members of the community, for 5s. was received 'for the games of the lades [lads'] pryke and the games of the same'.[65]

That these were silver games is shown by the first of the expenses recorded, which state that £2 17s. had been paid 'ffor the sylur gamys'. Such a large outlay suggests that the games required much preparation, and perhaps this included the purchase of targets and prizes. Furthermore, it appears that the organisation of these games needed some specialist help, for 4s. was spent to cover 'the charges rydyng to London & ellys wher for the gamys & with the gamys'. Of course, not all the games required outside expertise; for example, 4d. was spent 'for heggyng of the lepyng place'.[66]

It is clear that silver games were a sporting event and involved a number of different competitions. Some, such

as the running and jumping events, tested athletic prowess, while there seems to have been a variety of shooting competitions, apparently involving different targets. For example, a prick was a mark aimed at in shooting, and this traditionally occurred over a distance of 240 or 480 paces. Quite what the other games were is harder to say. The Oxford English Dictionary defines a 'tavel' variously as a bobbin used in silk weaving, a board, or a die, or a game of chance, and as a struggle. Thus this game was possibly either a dice game, or maybe a wrestling contest. The bishop of St Andrew's game remains obscure.

Receipts were not restricted to these sporting activities, however. Twelve parishes, including Great Dunmow itself, contributed a total of £3 13s. 2d. to this event, and a further 10d. was donated by 'sundrey persons towardes our churche'. Finally, 5s. 9d. was received 'for the Rynges'.[67] Beer was brewed and food was provided, but it is uncertain if these provisions were sold, or whether they were intended for the organisers of the event. Three men were paid for gathering money, perhaps from the spectators at each of the competitions. If this is the case, it seems that the shooting of the prick drew the largest crowd.[68]

Humphrey Roberts's complaint of 1572 makes it clear that silver games were widely publicized in advance throughout the surrounding area, so it is not surprising that many of those parishes which had previously contributed to Corpus Christi Day celebrations in Great Dunmow appear amongst those which gave towards the silver games in 1547; indeed, three parishes which had not previously given to Great Dunmow did so that year. It is possible that these donations were collected when the silver games were being publicized in those parishes. However, the use of a similar method of funding does not mean that these silver games are in any way connected to Corpus Christi Day. Rather, they were an event in their own right, adopted by the church in order to raise funds, and as such they were a success. Total receipts were £6 2s. 3d., but the costs came to only £4 10s. 9d..[69]

2] PLAYS AND FESTIVALS BETWEEN 1530 AND THE DEATH OF MARY

The most complete records of festive activity in Essex come from Great Dunmow and are contained in a single, continuous set of churchwardens' accounts. These begin in 1526 and continue into the following century. However, all forms of festive activity were last recorded in the 1540s. The last time that a 'ploughfeast' is mentioned was in 1541. After Christmas 1542 there are no further

references to a Lord of Misrule, while the last time that Corpus Christi Day generated a profit for Great Dunmow church was in 1543. A profit from May Day festivities was recorded in 1545, but that event was not mentioned thereafter. Finally, the silver games held in 1547 were the last communal, festive event to be included in that parish's churchwardens' accounts.[70]

One cannot say for certain why these activities either ended or were suspended. Part of the reason was no doubt the sense of unease and confusion which resulted from the changes that had occurred since the 1530s. In such a situation, parishes may have been less willing to express their devotion through the means of communal cooperation. The production of plays and other festive activities required people to give both time and effort, much of which was not rewarded financially. At times of religious certainty, when such efforts gained the parish concerned both money and, as importantly, honour, such projects would have seemed worthwhile. However, uncertainty and instability would no doubt have sapped many men's willingness to involve themselves with such enterprises. Furthermore, insecurity, created by rumours that the parish churches were the next institutions to which the crown would turn its attention, may have made parish authorities less willing to invest in such events, even

though, in the past, they had invariably gained a profit from these activities.

In addition, the central authorities certainly discouraged some specific forms of festive activity, which in itself may have made parishes less willing to support a wider range of events. The 1538 injunctions ordered that all lights in churches were to be put out except those on the altar, in the roodloft and before the Easter sepulchre; plough lights were amongst those extinguished by this order.[71] The Plough Monday gathering recorded in Heybridge pre-dates these injunctions, but two of the four ploughfeasts in Great Dunmow occurred after 1538. However, whereas before that date the profits from the ploughfeast were mentioned separately, after 1538 they were recorded in conjunction with the money gathered by the Lord of Misrule. Thus it appears that for a while the church in Great Dunmow continued to organise a collection on Plough Monday, but that this was included in the wider context of money raised at Christmas-time and the proceeds went towards the general church fund. Indeed, other churches in England certainly adopted this practice.[72] What is not certain is whether, after 1541, Plough Monday collections ceased, or if the profits simply no longer went into the coffers of the church.

Another popular custom was discouraged in July 1541. A proclamation was issued then which altered some fast days and feast days, and this also condemned the practice of selecting Boy Bishops during the Christmas period. Their activities were described as being 'unfitting and inconvenient...rather to the derision than to any true glory of God, or honour of His saints'. For this reason, the proclamation continued:

> the King's majesty...minding nothing so much as to advance the true glory of God without vain superstition, willeth and commandeth that from henceforth all such superstitious observations be left and clearly extinguished throughout all this his realm and dominions, for as much as the same do resemble rather the unlawful superstition of Gentility than the pure and sincere religion of Christ.[73]

Boy Bishops were only rarely selected in Great Dunmow, but it is possible that this proclamation augmented the wider sense of unease which was prevalent at that time, and so discouraged the continuation of other practices which might appear inappropriate for the church to promote. Plough Monday collections, which had already been implicitly attacked by the 1538 injunctions, were last made in the January prior to this proclamation. Opposition to the Lord of Misrule was shown by the curate

of Harwich in the mid-1530s, and although one was active in Great Dunmow at the Christmases of both 1541 and 1542 henceforth this character disappears from the records too. Indeed, the close similarity of his function to that of the already proscribed Boy Bishop probably contributed to the discontinuance of the Lord of Misrule in this parish. Similarly, another folk-festival, May Day, was not universally admired by churchmen because of its associations with sexual licence. And, once again, in the 1540s the parish authorities in Great Dunmow decided to disassociate the church from this festival.

The curtailment of this church's sponsorship of such folk-festivals might reflect some Protestant opposition to these activities. However, it is also possible that this parish's authorities were attempting to protect themselves from the charge of encouraging improper activities, and hence from any punitive measures that such an accusation might entail in the future. Such an explanation is speculative, but it would account for the willingness to dispense with these festivities when they were still making sizable contributions to the church's income, and prior to the general suppression of such popular customs under Edward VI.[74]

The organisation by the church of silver games, possibly in 1539 and 1542, but certainly in 1547, could be

explained by the church's need to fill the gap in its income brought about by the suppression of these folk-festivals. Then came the Edwardian assault on popular customs, on the grounds of the 'many inconveniences' arising from them, which would have included silver games along with Mays, Lords of Misrule and the such like, and thus prevented the games from becoming a regular source of income. The high costs of putting on silver games would have been another discouragement, especially once it was clear that the central authorities objected to such events.

However, although the church of Great Dunmow ceased to derive an income from these folk-festivals, it should not be assumed necessarily that they were no longer celebrated. Rather, it is possible that their organisation was removed fully into lay hands, along with any profits. There is no evidence from Great Dunmow that this was the case, but elsewhere it is obvious such customs did continue to be observed. For example, an oblique reference to continued May Day celebrations in Elizabethan Essex comes from Great Wakering, where a cart which was carrying a maypole overturned, killing a boy.[75] Furthermore, throughout England in the 1580s many places witnessed conflicts as godly ministers and town corporations attempted to suppress maypoles and other May Day activities, indicating a polarisation between this

folk-festival on the one hand and the godly authorities on the other.[76]

One custom from the Dunmow area certainly did transfer from religious into secular hands. Earliest records of the 'Dunmow Flitch' show that this event was administered by Little Dunmow priory. The custom involved a married couple swearing that no cross-word had passed between them for a year and a day. For this feat a side of bacon was awarded, which was recorded in the priory's cartulary. An oath attesting to the required matrimonial harmony was taken before the prior and convent by the husband, who was termed the Pilgrim, whilst he knelt on two sharp stones in the churchyard. Once the oath had been made, the Pilgrim was borne on men's shoulders, first about the priory's churchyard and then through the town, accompanied by the monks and townsfolk, with the bacon carried before him; he was eventually carried home in this manner. However, when Little Dunmow priory was dissolved in 1536 this custom continued, with the manor court adopting the priory's role, overseen by the steward. Indeed, it was still practiced in the eighteenth century when the Rev. Morant, from whose description the above is taken, was writing.[77]

Whilst some folk-festivals and customs may have survived the loss of church patronage, the continuation of religious drama seems to have been much less likely.

Corpus Christi Day celebrations last made a contribution to Great Dunmow church's income in 1543. In Maldon the detailed play accounts discussed above came from 1540. The chamberlains' accounts for the following year are damaged, but they mention both a professional company performing in the town and the construction of a stage in the friary. The accounts for both 1542 and 1543 have been lost, but in 1544 one John Suck was recorded as having 26s. 8d. 'styll in his hands of the monye which was gathered at the play'. Finally, in 1547 £3 17s. 4d. was 'received of William Hale for the profitts of the play this yere'. In 1546, 1550, 1553 and 1558 professional companies were rewarded, but it was only in the early 1560s that Maldon once more staged its own play.[78]

In Braintree the dramatic tradition seems to have been interrupted between the mid-1530s and the late-1560s, while there are no records of plays being performed in Haybridge after 1532.[79] Unease, instability and confusion brought about by the general religious situation after the break with Rome would all have contributed to this trend. For example, plays in Braintree had always centred on saints' lives, but nationally interest in saints seems to have waned after the 1538 injunctions removed from them the authority of being powerful intercessors.[80] However, the trend away from drama would have been strengthened by

antipathy towards plays, especially ones dealing with religious topics, which was shown by the authorities.

There was a discernible move away from the processional celebration of Corpus Christi Day about this time, with, for example, Ipswich apparently dropping its celebrations in 1531.[81] Furthermore, the bishop of London issued injunctions in 1542 which forbade the performance of plays and similar activities in the capital's churches.[82] It is possible that both these events contributed to the curtailment of Corpus Christi Day celebrations in Great Dunmow. Official antagonism towards drama was exemplified in 1544 when a royal proclamation limited the performance of plays and interludes within London to the houses of trusted citizens, or to the 'common halls of the companies, fellowships, or brotherhoods of the same city'.[83] As was the case with Bishop Bonner's injunctions, this proclamation was not directed at Essex, but that county's proximity to the capital may have meant that these measures had some influence.

Under Edward attacks on drama became more prevalent. In August 1549 plays and interludes in English were forbidden until All Saints Day because, it was claimed, they contained 'matter tending to sedition' and caused 'much disquiet, division, tumults, and uproars in this realm'.[84] At this time the prime concern for Protector

Somerset would have been the rebellions in the West and Norfolk, and it was no doubt to prevent trouble spreading that this proclamation was issued. However, it shows the influence with which drama was credited, and a further attempt to control such influence came in April 1551 when yet another proclamation stated that no 'common players or other persons...do play in the English tongue any manner interlude, play, or matter without they have special license to show for the same in writing under his majesty's sign, or signed by six of his highness' Privy Council'.[85]

Some plays were still performed, however. In Rayleigh in 1550 40s. was raised by the sale of certain church goods, particularly church plate and Catholic service books. Some of the money was used to repair the corn market in that town. However, half of it was given 'to the stage players that played at Raylegh on Trynyte Sondaye'.[86] As is so often the case, the subject of the play is unknown, but the desire by this parish to witness a play is evident. Furthermore, the way in which this production was funded does not suggest that drama should be associated necessarily with a religiously conservative milieu. Further evidence of a desire to accommodate professional companies comes from both Maldon, as is shown above, and from Harwich, where in May 1553 the marquis of Northampton's players were paid 16d. by the churchwardens

'for yt they dyd play in ye churche & yar gatherynge was very small by ye resson yt ye townes men ware nat at home'.[87]

Attempts to control dramatic productions were not made only by regimes opposed to papistry. If anything, the Marian Privy Council was more wary. For example, on 14 February 1556 Lord Rich was ordered to investigate a play which was due to be performed in Hatfield Broadoak at Shrovetide and to establish 'who shulde be the plaiers, what theffecte of the playe is, with suche other circumstaunces as he shall thinke mete'.[88] A letter sent to him five days later reveals that the Council realised it had nothing to fear on this occasion, and Rich was ordered to free the players, for they were 'honest householders & quiet personnes'. Vigilance was to continue, however, and Rich was told 'to have an eye & speciall care to stoppe the like occasions of assembling the people together hereafter'.[89]

Professor Collinson has argued that 'The first generation of English Protestants and perhaps the second too entertained little hostility towards plays'; they objected only to plays which spread what they considered to be false doctrines.[90] Furthermore, early Protestants used drama for their own propaganda purposes, although only a handful of these works have survived. Most were

written by obscure reforming clerics, but one author was the ex-friar and onetime Protestant bishop in Ireland, John Bale. His works may be considered anti-Catholic rather than positively Protestant, but it is claimed that he 'knew that dramatic performances which appealed to instincts and prejudices below the belt and somewhat beneath the level of the highest intelligence were a more effective means of spreading the new religion than learned treatises, more telling even than sermons'.[91]

Whether such Protestant plays were performed in Reformation Essex is not known, but the fear that they might be, together with the wish to avoid the large gatherings which plays attracted, no doubt caused the Marian Council to seek to control what was put on. Furthermore, some professional performers certainly spread the Reformed faith in Essex. As early as 1538 a minstrel was involved in an argument at Braintree because he sang a song against saints and their images, and it is probable that he was not alone in his sympathies. Indeed, the use of songs to spread the Word was of the greatest importance in the early years of the Reformation.[92]

A letter sent to Essex justices of the peace by the Privy Council in July 1557 shows that attempts to control drama continued to be made. The justices were:

> to suffer no players to play any enterlude within that county, but to see them punysshed that shall attempte the same, wherin they [i.e. the J.P.s] were admonisshed this last Terme in the Starre Chamber, and therfore it is thought straunge that they have not accordingly accomplisshed the same.[93]

Whether or not this admonishment had the desired effect is unknown, for few records of actual dramatic productions in Marian Essex are extant. However, as had been the case at the end of Edward's reign, the churchwardens of Harwich certainly did not discourage troupes of players from visiting their church. On 9 April 1557 the duke of Norfolk's players were given 10d. 'for yt they dyd playe in ye churche & had a small reward'.[94] How regularly such troupes visited that town is uncertain, for it was only when the players' profits were small that they are mentioned in the accounts. However, what is certain is that some churches did continue to stage plays, performed by professionals, throughout the period when religious drama organised by the community does not seem to have occurred.

3] RELIGIOUS DRAMA IN ELIZABETHAN ESSEX

Initially, the Elizabethan regime was no keener than its

predecessors to accommodate drama. On 16 May 1559 a proclamation was issued which prohibited unlicenced interludes and plays. The local authorities had to be notified of any intended performances, and a licence was required before a performance could proceed. Furthermore, the local officers were told:

> that they permit none to be played wherein either matters of religion or of the governance of the estate of the commonwealth shall be handled or treated, being no meet matters to be written or treated upon but by men of authority, learning, and wisdom, nor to be handled before any audience but of grave and discreet persons.[95]

However, from the 1560s religious drama was once more widely performed in Essex, until such productions ceased in the mid-1570s.

Braintree church was one which again profited from the production of plays. In 1569, thirty-five years after the last recorded play there, the churchwardens recorded that one had brought £5 into the church's coffers, although the subject of this play is not mentioned. The following year a profit of £9 7s. 7d. was made by another unidentified play, and the costumes were hired out for 1s. 8d.. However, 1570 is the last occasion when a profit generated

by a play is mentioned. In 1571 8s. 7d. was raised by 'lending the play gere', while a play book was sold for 20s.. Finally, in 1579 50s. was generated by the sale of 'the players apperel'.[96]

Thus there was a revival in dramatic activity in Braintree, and this was no financial disaster. However, in spite of the money which these productions brought the church, within a couple of years they had once more ceased and the script and costumes were soon sold, possibly to a professional troupe. Elsewhere, both Maldon and Chelmsford put on plays in the 1560s. However, in both these places, too, all such activity had stopped by the mid-1570s, and items required for such productions were sold. It is drama in these two towns which will now be examined.

The Maldon chamberlains' roll of 1562 reveals that a fair amount of preparation was needed before that year's production was put on. A key was bought for the chest in which the actors' costumes were kept, and these costumes were taken to a hall were they were prepared for the production. The armour was cleaned, gowns and coats were repaired, and new costumes were made.[97] The material for these new garments came from church vestments which the Elizabethan Settlement had made surplus to requirements, and similar items were used likewise in Chelmsford about

this time.[98] Such use of these garments reflects a pragmatic response to the changes which had occurred, but also shows that in these places such items were not hidden away in the hope or expectation of a return to Catholic worship.

As was shown above, drama in Maldon organised by the authorities had been suspended after 1547. Thus it is possible that so much preparation was required because these costumes had lain unused in their chest for fifteen years. An indication of the state that the costumes were in is given by the fact that over £2 was spent 'for the scowring of the harneis [armour] for the playe this yere'. On the one hand, this indicates that there were many pieces of armour which required cleaning, which in itself suggests that the cast was sizable; however, it is also clear that much work on the armour was required, suggesting it was in a poor state of repair.

A man named Burles was employed to produce this play, and he performed a similar role in Chelmsford the following year. The nature of the drama which occurred in Maldon is not revealed. A number of Protestant plays were in circulation at this time, and it is possible that one of these was staged. Alternatively, this production could have been based on one from the Henrician era purged of all 'popish' elements. This was the fate of the York Play

Cycle after the Elizabethan Settlement.[99] Placing such speculation to one side, it seems that this production failed to generate a profit, for none is recorded in the chamberlains' roll. This may have helped the decision, made on 21 December 1562, to sell the play costumes and thus bring an end to 'native' drama in Maldon. Over the next two years the wardrobe was dispersed, and all subsequent records of drama in Maldon refer to professional companies.[100]

It is not known whether religious drama had been produced in Chelmsford prior to Elizabeth's reign because the extant churchwardens' accounts do not begin until 1557. However, the suggestion of an earlier dramatic tradition in that town comes from 1538 when the churchwardens of Great Dunmow hired some 'playeres garmentes' from one Ayer of Chelmsford.[101] While it is by no means certain that it was the church which hired out these costumes, this entry suggests that some dramatic activity had been known in that town prior to 1557. Indeed, the large productions which were put on in 1563 are much more understandable if they continued an earlier tradition, rather than if they were an innovation.

In 1563 a series of four plays were produced in Chelmsford; separate accounts were made for the first and second, while the third and fourth plays' accounts were

recorded together.[102] At the beginning of each account the sum of the money received by the churchwardens is given, after which the charges incurred by that particular play were itemised. Things that were made or bought for the first play were no doubt used in later productions, and the first list of payments is by far the longest, containing seventy-seven entries which cost £23 3s.. This compares with thirty-seven payments, totalling £21 2s. 5d. for the second play, while the last two plays incurred sixty-four separate costs, which came to £26 19s..

As is so often the case with drama in Essex, the identity of the plays themselves remains a mystery. However, the accounts do provide certain indications of staging and characters, and this has provoked some speculation regarding what was performed. For example, Dr. Mapham suggests that this production may have comprised selected portions of the Ludus Coventriae, or the N-Town cycle as it is often called.[103] Alternatively, the concluding chapter of Dr. Coldewey's thesis concentrates on the theory that plays performed were three of the four contained in the Digby MS.133, since Myles Blomefylde, a prominent resident of Chelmsford from 1567, at one time owned at least three of the four plays in this manuscript.[104] However, the plays' true identities will never be known for certain.

The plays were advertised in advance. For example, the accounts of the first one state that £1 was 'paid unto the mynstrells for the showday and for the play days'. Furthermore, both players and minstrels went to Braintree to 'show' the play there, no doubt in order to attract people to the full production in Chelmsford.[105] Similarly, the second play was advertised in Maldon, while the third and fourth plays were publicized in Braintree once more, as well as in Chelmsford itself, where one Browne received 3d. 'for keapinge the cornehill [market] on the shewe daye'.[106] Both actors and musicians were involved in these 'showdays', and it is possible that what occurred was a procession, such as those which preceded performances in Chester and throughout Europe. These processions included actors in costumes, scenic devices, musicians and flag-bearers, and were designed to promote enthusiasm and curiosity amongst onlookers.[107]

Thus the plays themselves were performed only in Chelmsford, and these 'showdays' were intended to publicize their production. This interpretation conflicts with Dr. Mapham's assertion that the plays were acted in Braintree and Maldon after they had been performed in Chelmsford itself.[108] Dr. Mapham's argument appears to be wrong because 'showdays' were put on in Chelmsford as well as in Braintree and Maldon, yet in Chelmsford a clear distinction was made between these and the actual

performance of the plays. Furthermore, neither the accounts from Maldon nor Braintree mention the performance of the Chelmsford play in their towns.

The actors were probably local amateurs, for they were not paid, but were provided with food and drink on 'showdays' and when the plays were performed. However, it is clear that some outside expertise was required. The most obvious example is that Burles produced the first two plays, receiving £2 13s. 4d. and £2 2s. respectively. Furthermore, the accounts for both plays recorded that he and his boy had their accommodation paid for for at least three weeks. However, whether there was an equally sizable gap between productions is not indicated.[109]

A number of the men who helped to construct the staging for the first production seem to have been brought in especially, for they were provided with accommodation too. Thus Mattrice the sawyer, who was paid for nine days' work, had the costs of accommodating him and his man paid for, while Robert Lee, a painter, was boarded for two weeks. One Bollybrooke and five men were paid £1 2s. for six days work, together with their accommodation, and also received 12d. 'besyddes ther wages', but the capacity in which they were employed is not clear.[110]

It seems likely that some of the players' costumes were made from disused vestments, as had been the case in Maldon. This is suggested by Dr. Coldewey after he compared the inventories of church goods prepared in July 1560 and in February 1564. The accounts lack any mention of the sale of vestments recorded at the earlier date but no longer present in 1564. However, this second inventory does contain a list of players garments which were made out of similar materials to the missing vestments.[111] Thus Chelmsford, too, seems to have made pragmatic use of its resources.

The plays were performed in a pightel, which was a small field or enclosure. The preparation of this involved one and a half days movement of earth and it was enclosed with bushes. Planks for the stage of the first play took two and a half days carriage, and costumes which were made included 'the vices coote a Jornet of borders & a jerken of borders', for which William Hewet received 15s.. Fourteen hoops were purchased from a cooper, and these were probably used in the construction of scenery. Furthermore, the setting of this play is suggested by two payments. First, John Lokyer received 4s. 'for makynge of iiij shephokes and for iron worke that Burle occuped for the Hell'; then, 4d. was paid 'unto Lawrence for watchinge in the churche when the temple was a dryenge'. This first production failed to break even, however. The receipts

were £21 16s., but total charges came to £23 3s..[112] The later productions fared no better financially either.

Few additions needed to be made to the staging or wardrobe for the second play. Two loads of poles were bought from the cooper. One Andrewe was paid for lending 'heres [i.e. wigs] and beardes', and 'twoo gownnes and iiij jerkins' were made, which cost 6s. 8d.. In spite of requiring fewer purchases, however, the costs of £21 2s. 5d. far outweigh the £17 11s. 3d. which the churchwardens received at the second play.[113]

How the whole enterprise was initially financed is revealed by the accounts of the third and fourth plays. A total of £8 4s. 2d. was repaid to a number of men for money which they had 'lente at the ffurste playe'.[114] Thus money had been borrowed in order to cover the initial costs, no doubt from the wealthier elements of the local community, and this was repaid once the money from the plays started coming in. That they failed to make a profit must have made these repayments all the more arduous.

The last two plays were large-scale productions; for example, several minstrels must have been employed, for they received £1 13s. 4d. 'for the showe day and for the

playe daye'. It is possible that an effort was made to make these plays even more spectacular in an attempt to attract a larger audience, and thus increase profits. The production of the play had passed to Richard Parker and William Wythers, with help coming from one Broke. At the second play, Wythers had received £3 9s. 3d. 'for quarters & borde and for wages leide out to his men as apperithe in his bill', so he had clearly supplied workmen to help produce that production too. A great hoop and fifteen smaller ones were bought from the cooper, while paints, gold foil, 'assendewe', 'Spanyshe whighte' and 'Spanyshe browne', together with other such materials, were all bought for either one or both of the plays. Twenty-one pounds of gunpowder were bought from a tailor, Thomas Whale, and this was no doubt used to create some special effect, perhaps smouldering in the Hell set.[115]

The accounts of these last two plays provide more evidence of staging. Wythers was paid 10s. 'for makinge the frame for the Heaven stage & tymber for the same', and he received a further 14s. 4d. 'for makynge the laste temple the waies & his paynnes'. Furthermore, fifty fathoms of line were bought 'for the clowdes'. Ten men were paid 'to beare the pagante' and they were also provided with drink, while 7s. went 'to Roistone for payntenge the jeiante [giant] the pagannte & writtinge the plaiers names'. Props and costumes included liveries and

bow strings, while John Wright received 1s. 4d. 'for makyng a cotte of lether for Christe'.[116]

Thus at least one of these plays involved a story from the New Testament, and various sets were used. How these stages were arranged is not indicated. However, it is possible that much of the action occurred in a generalized locus, which at different times in the play represented different settings, while the Heaven, Hell and Temple stages formed a scenic cluster, possibly centred on the Heaven set. Such configurations were well known on the Continent, and it has been suggested that the Ludus Coventriae may have been staged in this way.[117]

Such an arrangement would allow the action to transfer easily from one set to another. For example, if one of the plays happened to portray the Ascension, the clouds could be used to raise Christ from one set into Heaven, which would be situated above; but, of course, there is no evidence that this event was included in the Chelmsford productions. Similarly, the pageant may have been a movable piece of scenery. Dr. Coldewey suggests that the third and fourth plays were Mary Magdalene from Digby MS.133, and that the pageant was the ship which took the eponymous heroine to France.[118] Alternatively, the pageant may have moved the giants which had been painted. All such suggestions are only speculative, however; what

is certain is that much effort went into staging the 1563 production in Chelmsford.

However, the need to repay those debts accumulated at the first play, together with the complex sets required for these latter two productions, meant that the last two plays made the greatest loss. The costs incurred were £26 19s., but the churchwardens only received £19 19s. 4d.. This loss, in addition to those of the earlier two plays, may help to explain why, after 1563, the church in Chelmsford does not seem to have produced any further plays.

The only other occasion when dramatic activity is mentioned in this town was on 29 March 1576, when the churchwardens recorded that 8d. was 'paide to Drane for mendinge of x broken holes in the church windowes which was done at the late playe'.[119] It is likely that the church was staging a play performed by a professional troupe. The disturbance which led to the windows being broken may have been caused by those opposed to plays. Alternatively, the audience of the play may simply have become rowdy; opponents of plays had long argued that they gave rise to civil disorder.[120] A more mundane possibility is that the windows were accidentally broken whilst the stage was being erected in the church. Whatever the explanation for the broken windows was,

however, the trend away from communally organised drama is indicated further by the church selling its play costumes, along with superfluous vestments, for £6 13s. 4d. also in that year.[121]

The wardrobe, however, had not lain idle between 1563 and 1576. On several occasions these costumes were hired out by the church. For example, the churchwardens' accounts for the year 27 February 1564 to 3 March 1566 record that 53s. 3d. was paid by Colchester men for the use of the garments, 10s. came from Walden for the hire of three gowns, while men of Billericay, twice, Colchester, twice more, and Little Baddow all paid 26s. 8d. a time to borrow the wardrobe; for the 'children of Badowe' the cost was only 6s. 8d..[122] Costumes were also hired by men from High Easter, Langham, Witham, Brentwood and Boreham, amongst others, between the Chelmsford production and the sale of its wardrobe.[123]

4] THE END OF COMMUNAL RELIGIOUS DRAMA IN ESSEX

Communal drama had great vitality in the 1560s and early-1570s and it occurred in a number of places, many of which have not left detailed records. However, by the end of the 1570s such activities appear to have ceased. There is no single reason why this was so; rather, a number of

factors combined which discouraged towns and parishes from continuing to organise dramatic productions.

As can be seen above, the organisation of a play took a great deal of time, effort and money. Stages and auditoria had to be prepared, scenery had to be constructed, costumes needed to be provided, and actors and technicians were required. By the sixteenth century elaborate productions had become the norm, which had led to spiralling production costs. The result was that the financing of such events fell to men whose interests were not primarily theatrical, but were concerned with commercial common sense and administrative efficiency.[124] For example, in Maldon it was the town authorities which were the motivating force behind the production of plays, while in Chelmsford the churchwardens administered the 1563 productions there.

So long as the production of plays remained uncontroversial this management system worked well. However, with the advent of the Reformation, the tranquillity of trust and confidence was replaced by mistrust and suspicion, for hierarchies, both of the Church and within individual lay communities, split into factions as they came under various, conflicting influences. Drama became involved in this conflict, for it was adopted as a polemical weapon by Catholics and

Protestants alike, whereas previously it had conveyed merely the truths of orthodox Catholicism.[125] In such a situation, the unanimity of purpose required to organise and finance large-scale productions was lost. As Professor Wickham says: 'these plays did not die through any loss of religious faith or through any wish on the part of the performers to abandon acting or other aspects of play production: they collapsed and disappeared because the economics of play-production on so lavish and extended a scale had become too unwieldy for performances to continue without strong management at the centre'.[126]

During the turmoil of the 1540s and 1550s it is understandable that centres of dramatic activity in Essex ceased to put on plays. What with pressure from above, divisions within the communities themselves, and a general sense of uncertainty in all matters pertaining to religion, an unwillingness to invest large amounts of capital in the production of a play is hardly surprising. Two of the main functions of such plays - to present an image of communal piety and, through this, to bring honour upon the place where the play was produced - were lost amid the division and confusion brought about by the Reformation. Questions must have been raised in the minds of potential sponsors as to the worthiness and desirability of such plays, and many no doubt withdrew their support.

However, as has been shown above, there was a revival in community-organised drama during the 1560s. This suggests that with the degree of stability brought about by the Elizabethan Settlement, communities' hierarchies were once more willing to invest in events which, in the past, had always returned good profits. However, whilst those productions which occurred in Braintree made a profit, no profit was recorded in the chamberlains' roll from Maldon; the Chelmsford churchwardens made a large loss through the production of plays there. Thus in these latter two towns production costs had become too high to make the staging of a play viable; for example, in Chelmsford in 1563 receipts for the four plays totalled £59 6s. 7d., yet a sizable loss was still incurred. Commercial considerations, therefore, had a great influence upon the fate of religious drama in Essex.

However, the question of money is not the whole story, for what was performed is important too. The nature of the Elizabethan productions in Braintree is unknown, and nothing can be deduced about what was performed in those places which hired costumes from either there or Chelmsford. However, it is likely that the 1562 play in Maldon owed much to productions from the Henrician period, while the staging and costumes provided for the Chelmsford plays the following year certainly suggest that they were in a traditional style. By the 1560s such traditional

formats were becoming outmoded. For example, in 1568 the dean of York refused to approve the text of the Creed Play which had been performed in that city since the fifteenth century. He commented:

> thoghe it was plawsible [ten] yeares agoe, and wold now also of the ignorant sort be well liked, yet now in the happie time of the gospell I knowe the learned will mislike it, and how the state will beare ite I know not.[127]

Whilst this play may have retained certain traditional elements which a Protestant cleric could find objectionable, the tenor of the comment is that this type of play was no longer acceptable to educated people. However, the latter were from the very class whose support was needed to finance a large-scale production.

The advent of professional performers of interludes also served to undermine amateur productions. These nomadic groups, although patronised by masters, were self-sufficient, and production costs were minimal because they were borne by the actors themselves. Thus they did not rely on any commercially-minded management committee to allow them to perform. They could not match the splendour of communally financed productions, but they had the advantage of a wider experience of audience response and

reaction, which in turn led to self-confidence. Furthermore, the performers were versatile.[128]

Such troupes were certainly active in Essex at the time when communal productions were facing difficulties; indeed, those plays which have left records from the reigns of Edward and Mary were performed by such groups. Thus perhaps some in Essex came to want more professional performances, which might help to explain why some of the plays in Essex of the 1560s were not the financial successes that investors expected. Furthermore, plays performed by such groups had the dual advantage of satisfying the people's desire for drama whilst not involving any financial risk for anyone apart from the performers themselves. Indeed, the encouragement of professional troupes was the final stage in the development of drama in Maldon.

In addition, from the late-1560s the Church came to oppose drama, whereas initially it was only plays that conveyed false doctrines which had been found objectionable.[129] Opposition was generated for a variety of reasons. Some regarded plays as being in competition with preaching, while others considered that they offended decency and public order, as well as encouraging idleness and vice. Other objections were less concrete: some regarded plays as 'lies', with particular objections being

levelled at boys playing female roles; others disliked theatrical eroticism; some wished to close up what they considered 'the idolatrous eye', through which evil could enter into man.[130]

In particular Edmund Grindal, who was bishop of London between 1559 and 1570, before becoming archbishop of York, opposed plays. For example, in 1563 Grindal suggested to Cecil that all plays in the capital should be suspended for a year on account of the plague, to which request he added 'and if it were for ever it were not amiss'.[131] Once he was in the North Grindal saw that by the mid-1570s plays were put down in York and Wakefield, and he attempted to suppress the Chester plays, too.[132] Thus it is highly likely that whilst he was bishop of London he actively discouraged plays, which would have made people in Essex less willing to invest in them. Indeed, Professor Collinson suggests that Grindal's complaint in 1563 may have been what prompted the lord mayor to issue a proclamation in February 1564 condemning the large numbers of people attending plays, and introducing a form of theatrical licensing.[133]

The developing conflict between drama and the Church was not merely a case of the latter taking the offensive, however. For example, in 1566 the churchwardens of Hornchurch appeared before the court of the archdeacon of

Essex because they 'did bringe in to the church certyn playirs the which did playe and declare certayn things against the ministers'.[134] No further details of this case are provided, but such a play would not have endeared that pastime to the Church authorities. Yet these actors were not the only professional performers who were not enamoured with the religious situation of the 1560s. In 1566 a minstrel said in Kelvedon 'that is a relygyon in deade soche a religion he carethe not for'.[135] Irreligious views such as these were not confined to professional performers, but they posed a threat which the Church authorities wished to deal with.

Thus by the Elizabethan period the production of religious plays by the community faced a number of difficulties. For some, such plays were old-fashioned. Others were opposed to them on religious grounds or because of the civil disorder which it was feared such events would promote, and so disliked drama per se. Perhaps above all else, the cost of staging a production had risen so high that people became unwilling to finance such events. Yet for many the appetite for plays seems to have remained; this, however, could be satisfied by the professional troupes.

In 1576, the same year that the churchwardens of Chelmsford sold that town's wardrobe, the first permanent

theatre in London was opened.[136] This reflects the alteration in the function of drama in Early Modern England, a change encouraged by the English Reformation and one which parallels the privatization of religion itself.[137] What in earlier times would have been seen as a community celebrating its communal piety through the medium of a religious play had become, at best, an anachronism, and at worst, idolatry and blasphemy. Religion and drama were driven apart, the one to the godly, the other to the playhouse. Had there been no Reformation, alterations in drama would have occurred, of course. However, the path which was followed owed much to the changing religious situation after 1530.

CONCLUSION

ESSEX AND THE ENGLISH REFORMATION

In recent years a number of local studies have been produced which examine popular religion at the time of the English Reformation, and these have revealed certain trends which show that the experiences of Essex between 1500 and 1570 are not unique.

There was a shift away from the Church's organisation of religious drama and communal festivities in Essex during the period covered by this study, and this trend was apparent throughout England. Popular festivities were deemed to be 'inconvenient' by the Edwardian regime, and in the late-1540s their association with parish churches was severed throughout the country.[1] The cost involved in staging religious plays and the cheaper alternative of professional troupes, together with Protestant hostility to drama *per se* and a growing belief amongst the educated classes that such drama was old-fashioned, brought an end to communal organisation of such events by the mid-1570s. Thus there was a decline in the association of religion with ritualised, visual activities, and this was apparent not only in drama and popular customs, but in the everyday celebration of religion too. This both caused a clear break with the traditions of the past, and brought to an

end activities which had helped to maintain traditional beliefs.[2]

The response of the parish churches in Essex to the changing religious policies between 1535 and 1570 was also mirrored by parishes elsewhere in England. Ronald Hutton has examined 198 sets of churchwardens accounts from this period, and he concludes that nationally most parishes instituted Reformed practices only in response to official instructions, and did not establish them by their own initiative; also, he asserts that their cooperation was gained by official supervision and coercion, not because the changes had a popular basis. Thus the tendency of Essex parishes to adopt changes of decor and practices should not be regarded as 'unprincipled', as Oxley does, but rather as bearing witness to the authorities' ability to ensure conformity.[3]

It is probable that alterations to parish churches weakened the laity's commitment to traditional religion, and do not indicate that such disenchantment was already prevalent. Changes in expressions of piety amongst the laity are most clearly seen in wills, and these have been examined in a number of local studies. However, methods used have varied from historian to historian.

Traditional piety, expressed both in the preambles and the content of wills, was popular in Essex up to the eve of the Reformation. The traditional expressions of belief declined from the 1530s until the death of Henry; they then collapsed under Edward. There was a slight revival during the Marian era, but all traditional expressions of piety swiftly disappeared once Elizabeth ascended to the throne. The collapse of the traditional order was not matched by a corresponding rise in expressions of Protestant belief, and it is only in the late 1560s that the use of Protestant preambles began making significant advances. Even then, however, only a third of testators chose to bequeath their soul using Reformed phraseology, while few made bequests for Reformed religious practices.[4] A similar pattern is apparent throughout England, although traditional piety was more popular for longer in some areas, while Protestantism made more headway earlier in others.

Will preambles are one index by which historians have sought to trace the decline of traditional beliefs and the advance of Protestantism, although caution must be exercised - preambles may not necessarily indicate the beliefs of the testator.[5] However, preambles do indicate the religious milieu in a given place at a given time, and for this reason their study is worthwhile. Ideally, this

should be coupled with an examination of the contents of the wills.

In all areas traditional preambles, in which the soul was bequeathed to God, St Mary and the saints, were numerous on the eve of the Reformation, after which they declined. For example, in Yorkshire nearly ninety percent of wills began in such a way between 1538 and 1540, but by 1547 this figure had declined to sixty-two percent, and to thirty-seven percent by 1550. Under Mary about seventy-five percent of preambles were traditional, but even then over five percent were openly Protestant.[6] In Kent over ninety percent of wills had a traditional preamble in the early-1530s, but by 1546 only fifty-two percent did. This figure had fallen to six percent by 1552, and although there was a recovery to about forty percent in the second half of Mary's reign, in 1560 the figure had dropped again to nine percent.[7] In East Sussex the decline in traditional preambles was slower than in Kent, but the figures closely resemble those from Essex. Between 1530 and 1543 over eighty percent of wills from the archdeaconry of Lewes had traditional preambles. This figure fell to thirty-seven percent in the first three years of Edward's reign and to ten percent between 1550 and 1553. There was a recovery to forty-five percent in the latter half of Mary's reign, before a slump to

nineteen percent in 1559.[8] A similar pattern has been noted in the South-West of England.[9]

Overtly Protestant preambles have been found in all the areas mentioned above, and these first appeared from the mid-1530s. However, as in Essex, preambles which bequeathed the soul to God alone saw the greatest initial growth in all areas. Thus throughout England traditional preambles declined to be replaced mainly by ones which were of little doctrinal significance. Whilst Professor Dickens and Drs. Mayhew and Clark argue that such preambles reflect Reformist tendencies, my assessment is that they merely indicate a move away from expressions of traditional piety. This was not necessarily caused by the assimilation of Protestant doctrines, but rather by uncertainty and confusion at a time of religious upheaval.

Changes in the contents of wills from Essex are also mirrored by those from other areas of England. It has been asserted that up to the 1540s the men and women of England were pouring money and gifts into their parish churches through their wills, whilst two out of three testators explicitly sought prayers at their death.[10] This commitment to the old order is confirmed not only by Essex wills, but also by ones from the South-West of England, East Sussex, Kent and the diocese of Lincoln, whilst it has been claimed that in Lancashire 'there was

certainly a real enthusiasm for traditional practices', with people investing in church fabric, lights, images and intercessory institutions.[11]

In all these areas investment in the old order declined after 1535, collapsed under Edward, revived slightly under Mary and collapsed again in the early years of Elizabeth's reign, although the Henrician decline was less marked in areas more distant from London, such as Lancashire. In all these areas, too, a greater percentage of testators gave alms to the poor under Edward and Elizabeth than under Henry or Mary. Thus Essex testators reacted to the religious changes after 1535 in a very similar way to those from other parts of England.

Protestantism did develop amongst some Essex people early in the sixteenth century, as in many parts of England. Areas of Protestant influence have been detected by will preambles and by the persecution which occurred under Mary, but it is likely that such sources underestimate the actual numbers of Protestants. Professor Dickens has traced Protestant centres throughout much of England, and indications of such groups by the Edwardian era have been found in most local studies.[12]

Whilst conversion to Protestantism was usually a very personal affair, its early development tended to be in

areas where certain conditions existed. Reformed doctrines often took root in towns. We can accept Christopher Haigh's explanation for this: the creed relied on the printed word, and literacy was much more common amongst tradesmen than husbandmen. Furthermore, regular and popular preaching was more common in towns than in rural parishes. Areas where Lollardy had been known tended to be congenial to Protestantism, while the influence of travellers and books imported from abroad meant that ports also accommodated its early growth.[13]

All such conditions existed in the North-East of Essex, where Protestantism in that county appears to have been strongest. Similarly, many of these conditions were to be found in other regions where Protestantism grew early on. For example, in the South-West of England most of the few anti-Catholics in the late-1540s came from the towns, while in East Sussex Protestantism was strong in the Cinque ports of Rye, Winchelsea and Hastings.[14] However, few can really be described as Protestant, even in areas where conditions were most favourable, by the 1560s.

In Essex and elsewhere the main result of the Reformation between 1530 and 1570 was not the growth of Protestantism but the destruction of the traditional order. Robert Whiting has described the early Reformation as being 'less a transition from Catholicism to

Protestantism than a decline from religious commitment into conformism or indifference'.[15] Whilst I agree with the first part of this statement, the evidence from churchwardens' accounts, church court records and government documents relating to Essex suggests that the parishes of that county conformed because of supervision and coercion by the authorities, rather than because of lack of concern for religious matters. The resultant changes would have been clearly apparent to parishioners, amongst whom they are likely to have generated uncertainty and confusion. However, there is little evidence of indifference; throughout the period covered by this study the people of Essex exhibited a desire to maintain orderly religious devotion within the limits imposed by the authorities.

Dr. Haigh has argued that it was only towards the end of this period that it became apparent that a Protestant Reformation was actually happening, and both he and Professor Scarisbrick have shown that the English Reformation was piecemeal, which made it easier for it to occur without provoking violent opposition.[16] Furthermore, the changes generated a conflict of loyalties, for people were faced with remaining loyal either to their faith or to their monarch. It is not surprising that most saw loyalty to the king as paramount; indeed, most conservative bishops acquiesced to the

changes of the 1530s 'because they accepted the rights of the king and parliament in the regulation of religion, and because the unity of the realm was more important to them than the unity of Christendom'.[17] The result was that by 1570 most people accepted Christian principles, but whilst they had had their Catholic faith destroyed, they had not adopted Protestantism. This was not due to indifference, but because the destruction of the old order was seldom accompanied by the evangelism of the new, and because the new order 'of the word' would have had only a limited appeal amongst the illiterate masses.

How far, then, does this study of popular religion in Essex between 1500 and 1570 confirm the revisionist interpretation of the English Reformation?

In the decades prior to the Reformation most Essex people accepted traditional doctrines, despite there being some inadequacies in the Church's ability to minister to its flock. There was some Lollard rejection of the Catholic Church, but most people eagerly pursued traditional religious practices. Thus the first phase of Dr. Haigh's 'revisionist strategy', which is the denial of underlying causes of the Reformation, can be argued for Essex, which refutes Oxley's assertion that Essex was ready for the Reformation before it occurred.[18]

The second step in the revisionist argument, which seeks to reduce the role of Protestantism as a progressive ideological movement, and the third, which emphasises the continued popularity of Catholicism, are also evident to some degree in this county.[19] There were active Protestants in Essex from the 1530s, and the evidence from Mary's reign suggests that by the 1550s they were fairly numerous and were extremely committed to the Reformed Church. However, it is also clear that even in the late-1560s only a minority of the Essex population were Protestants. The changes in religious practice and popular piety between 1530 and 1570 resulted from the response of the laity to the policies of the authorities, and did not occur because of the growth of popular Protestantism. There was a minority who remained true to the Catholic faith; evidence of traditional piety appears in wills and church court records up to the 1560s, and some embraced recusancy in the Elizabethan period. However, for the majority, the remnants of Catholic faith were destroyed soon after Elizabeth's accession, but they were not replaced by a Protestant alternative.

Thus the Reformation in Essex was a piecemeal process, and the changes which occurred in parish life were mainly initiated from above. The conversion of some people to Protestantism indicates a limited 'quick' Reformation from 'below'; however, only a minority had been converted by

the time Elizabeth was excommunicated. Thus by 1570 the Reformation was only half achieved: the old order had been mostly destroyed, but Protestantism still waited to be successfully proclaimed, as is indicated by the lack of preaching reported to the church courts throughout the 1560s. This evangelism occurred mainly after 1570, but the inherent characteristics of Protestantism no doubt made this an arduous and, at times, fruitless task.

ABBREVIATIONS

A.P.C.	Acts of the Privy Council, ed. J.R. Dasent (32 vols., London, 1890-1907).
B.I.H.R.	Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.
BL	British Library.
Cal.Ass.Recs.	Calendar of Assize Records: Essex Indictments Elizabeth I, ed. J. Cockburn (London, 1978).
C.P.R.	Calendar of the Patent Rolls, Henry VII (2 vols., London, 1914-16), Edward VI (6 vols., London, 1924-29), Philip & Mary (4 vols., London, 1937-9), Elizabeth I (9 vols., London, 1939-).
C.S.	Camden Society.
C.S.P.	Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1547-1580 (London, 1856).
Eng.Hist.Docs.	English Historical Documents, vol.V (1485-1558), ed. C.H. Williams (London, 1967).
E.H.R.	English Historical Review.
ERO	Essex Record Office.
H.J.	Historical Journal.
J.E.H.	Journal of Ecclesiastical History.
L.& P.	Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII,

	eds. J.S. Brewer, J. Gairdner & R.H. Brodie (21 vols. & Addenda, London, 1862-1932).
P.& P.	Past and Present.
PCC	Prerogative Court of Canterbury.
PRO	Public Record Office.
T.E.A.S.	Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society.
T.R.H.S.	Transactions of the Royal Historical Society.
Tudor Procs.	Tudor Royal Proclamations, eds. P.L. Hughes & J.F. Larkin (3 vols., Yale, 1964-9).
V.C.H.	Victoria County History.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. J.E. Oxley, The Reformation in Essex to the Death of Mary (Manchester, 1965) [hereafter Oxley, Ref. in Essex], passim; C. Haigh, 'The Recent Historiography of the English Reformation', The English Reformation Revised, ed. C. Haigh (Cambridge, 1987) [hereafter Haigh, 'Recent Historiography'], pp.21-6.
2. Oxley, Ref. in Essex, p.1.
3. ibid., pp.2, 186 & 266.
4. ibid., pp.3 & 16.
5. ibid., pp.63, 144-5 & 180.
6. ibid., pp.238 & 266-7.
7. ibid., p.147.
8. ibid., pp.2-3 & 258.
9. ibid., p.3.
10. ibid., p.260-2.
11. C. Haigh, The English Reformation Revised (Cambridge, 1987) [hereafter Haigh, Eng. Ref. Revised], pp.1-11.
12. J.J. Scarisbrick, The Reformation and the English People (Oxford, 1984) [hereafter Scarisbrick, Ref. & People]; S. Brigden, London and the Reformation (Oxford, 1989) [hereafter Brigden, London]; C. Haigh, Reformation and Resistance in Tudor

Lancashire (Cambridge, 1975) [hereafter Haigh, Ref. & Resistance]: R. Whiting, The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular Religion and the English Reformation (Cambridge, 1989) [hereafter Whiting, Blind Devotion].

13. Norden's Description of Essex. ed. H. Ellis (C.S., London, 1840) [hereafter Norden]. p.7.
14. For a discussion of the Essex economy at this time, see W. Hunt, The Puritan Moment: The Coming of Revolution in an English County (Harvard, 1983) [hereafter Hunt, Puritan Moment]. pp.3-23.
15. ibid., p.4.
16. ibid., p.19.
17. Norden, pp.8-9.
18. ibid., p.9.
19. Hunt, Puritan Moment, p.8.
20. ibid., p.11; Norden, p.9.
21. Hunt, Puritan Moment, pp.12-13; Norden, pp.10-11.
22. M.D. Knowles & R.N. Hadcock, Medieval Religious Houses England and Wales. (2nd edn., Harlow, 1971), passim.

CHAPTER ONE: THE CHURCH IN ESSEX ON THE EVE OF THE REFORMATION

1. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.2-4 & 7-9.

2. ERO D/ABW 3/8 & D/ABW 39/7.
3. ERO D/AEW 1/270 & D/AEW 1/282; PRO PCC Porch fo.81v.
4. ERO T/A 242 fo.25r.
5. The First Book of the Churchwardens' Accounts of Heybridge, Essex (c.1509-1532). ed. W.J. Pressey (n.d.) [hereafter CW Heybridge]. passim.
6. ERO D/AEW 1/310 & D/ACR 2 fo.243v.
7. ERO D/ACR 2 fo.67r.
8. ERO D/AEW 1/281 & D/ACR 2 fo.150r.; PRO PCC Jankyn fo.138r.
9. ERO D/ACR 1 fo.130v.
10. See Appendix 1.
11. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People. pp.12-15.
12. P.Heath, 'Urban Piety in the Later Middle Ages: The Evidence of Hull Wills', The Church, Politics and Patronage in the Fifteenth Century. ed. B. Dobson (Gloucester, 1984) [hereafter Heath, 'Urban Piety'], p.217.
13. G. Rosser, Medieval Westminster 1200-1540 (Oxford, 1989), p.264.
14. P. Morant, The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex (2 vols., London, 1763-8) [hereafter Morant, Essex]. ii, p.405.
15. ERO D/P 192/5/2 p.95; K.V. Thomas, Religion and the Decline of Magic (London, 1971) [hereafter Thomas, Relig. & Magic]. p.34.

16. ERO D/P 192/5/2 passim.
17. Thomas, Relig. & Magic. pp.71-4.
18. M. Rubin, 'Corpus Christi: Inventing a Feast', History Today 40 (1990) [hereafter Rubin, 'Corpus Christi'], p.15.
19. ibid.. p.21.
20. J.M. Bennett, 'Conviviality and Charity in Medieval and Early Modern England', P.& P. 134 (1992) [hereafter Bennett, 'Conviviality'], pp.26-8.
21. ERO D/P 27/5 passim.
22. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.23v.
23. ERO D/P 27/5 passim; Thomas, Relig. & Magic. p.35.
24. A. Kreider, English Chantries: The Road to Dissolution (Harvard, 1979) [hereafter Kreider, Eng. Chantries]. p.8.
25. ERO D/P 11/5/1 passim.
26. ERO T/A 242 fo.25v.; CW Heybridge. pp.41-4.
27. CW Heybridge. pp.15, 28 & 40; the editor of Heybridge's churchwardens' accounts suggests that 'camping' comes from the Latin for field, campus. Professor Collinson notes that in the sixteenth century football was known as 'camping' in East Anglia (P. Collinson, The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625 (Oxford, 1982) [hereafter Collinson, Relig. of Prots.]. p.225).

28. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People. pp.11-12; C. Harper-Bill, The Pre-Reformation Church in England 1400-1530 (Harlow, 1989) [hereafter Harper-Bill, Pre-Ref. Ch.]. pp.72-3.
29. Brigden, London. p.29.
30. PRO PCC Ayloffe fo.147v. & Bodfelde fo.85r.; J.A.F. Thomson, 'Piety and Charity in Late Medieval London', J.E.H. 16 (1965) [hereafter Thomson, 'Piety & Charity'], p.179; Heath, 'Urban Piety', p.212.
31. C. Burgess, ''By Quick and by Dead': Wills and Pious Provision in Late Medieval Bristol', E.H.R. 102 (1987), pp.837-58; Heath, 'Urban Piety', p.213.
32. Thomson, 'Piety & Charity', p.180.
33. ERO D/ABW 33/82.
34. See Appendix 1.
35. Heath, 'Urban Piety', p.215.
36. ERO D/AEW 1/301.
37. ERO D/ACR 1 fo.199r.
38. ERO D/ACR 1 fo.224r.
39. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People. pp.5-6.
40. J. Bossy, 'The Mass as a Social Institution, 1200-1700', P.& P. 100 (1983), p.42.
41. C. Burgess, ''A Fond Thing Vainly Invented': An Essay on Purgatory and Pious Motive in Later Medieval England', Parish, Church and People. ed. S. Wright (London, 1988) [hereafter Burgess,

'Purgatory'], pp.60-3.

42. Ibid., pp.66-8.

43. L.& P., i. g.3324 (20) & iv pt.i, g.546 (2).

44. Kreider, Eng. Chantries, p.72.

45. Valor Ecclesiasticus, ed. J. Caley & J. Hunter (6 vols., London, 1810-34), i, p.439 & PRO E.301/19 no.40.

46. ERO D/P 77/7/1.

47. Heath, 'Urban Piety', pp.218-9; Kreider, Eng. Chantries, p.8.

48. ERO D/ACR 2 fo.152v.

49. ERO D/ACR 1 fo.175r.; other examples include ERO D/ACR 1 fo.49v. & D/ACR 2 fos.8v. & 104r.

50. ERO D/AEW 1/290.

51. J. Bossy, 'Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries', Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World, ed. D. Baker (Studies in Church History, 10, 1973) [hereafter Bossy, 'Blood & Baptism'], p.137.

52. ERO D/ACR 2 fos.30 & 31.

53. Burgess, 'Purgatory', pp.56-84.

54. S. Brigden, 'Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London', P.& P. 103 (1984) [hereafter Brigden, 'Soc. Obligation'], p.103.

55. ERO D/ACR 1 fo.66r. & D/ACR 2 fo.44v.

56. PRO E.301/19; Kreider, Eng. Chantries. p.68.
57. Brigden, London. p.47.
58. C. Burgess, ''For the Increase of Divine Service': Chantries in the Parish in Late Medieval Bristol', J.E.H. 36 (1985) [hereafter Burgess, 'Chantries'], pp.50-9.
59. PRO E.301/19 nos.1 & 5.
60. Harper-Bill, Pre-Ref. Ch.. p.47.
61. ERO D/ACR 1 fo.171v.
62. Brigden, London. p.66.
63. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People. p.6.
64. PRO PCC Moone fo.99v.; ERO D/AEW 1/287.
65. ERO D/AEW 1/264; PRO PCC Porch fo.189v.
66. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People. Chapter 2; Brigden, 'Soc. Obligation', pp.94-102; B.A. Hanawalt, 'Keepers of the Lights: Late Medieval English Parish Guilds', Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies 14 (1984) [hereafter Hanawalt, 'Keepers of the Lights'], pp.21-37.
67. R.C. Fowler, 'The Religious Gilds of Essex', T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), pp.282-9.
68. PRO E.301/19 nos.1, 13, 19, 21, 28, 31, 36, 45, 46, 47, 129, 165, 182, 189 & 199; E.301/20 nos.1, 18, 19, 21, 30, 31, 49 & 55.
69. See Appendix 2.
70. See Appendix 3; Scarisbrick, Ref. & People. pp.26-8.

71. ERO D/AEW 1/342 & D/AEW 1/368.

72. ERO D/AEW 1/360.

73. Brigden, 'Soc. Obligation', p.94.

74. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People, p.20.

75. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.30v.

76. ERO T/A 242 f.25v.; Morant, Essex, ii, p.400; Scarisbrick, Ref. & People, p.25.

77. 'The Gild of All Saints, Moreton', ed. T.H. Curling, T.E.A.S., N.S. 11 (1911) [hereafter 'All Saints, Moreton'], pp.223-9. This is not an original document, but has come down to us by transcription. In his brief introduction, Curling says that the statutes and prayers of this guild were preserved in the church chest of Moreton and were transcribed in May 1800. They were subsequently printed as an appendix to Gough's The History and Antiquities of Pleshy, published in 1803. No hint is given of what became of the original, and no mention of this guild has been found in any other source.

78. Hanawalt, 'Keepers of the Lights', p.21.

79. Brigden, 'Soc. Obligation', pp.84-92.

80. Ibid., p.89; C. Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and the Citizen: The Communal Year at Coventry, 1450-1550', The Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1200-1540, eds. R. Holt & G. Rosser (London, 1990) [hereafter Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony & the

Citizen'], p.245.

81. Restrictions on guild membership has been noted by G. Rosser, 'Communities of Parish and Guild in the Late Middle Ages'. Parish, Church and People, ed. S. Wright (London, 1988) [hereafter Rosser, 'Parish & Guild'], pp.35-7.

82. Brigden, 'Soc. Obligation', p.109.

83. G.M. Benton, 'Religious Gilds of Essex'. T.E.A.S., N.S. 15 (1918-20), p.98.

84. Brigden, 'Soc. Obligation', p.67.

85. 1 Cor.11:27-30.

86. Brigden, 'Soc. Obligation', pp.73-81; Bossy, 'Blood & Baptism', pp.140-2.

87. Rosser, 'Parish & Guild', pp.38-9.

88. PRO C.1 935/13-14.

89. PRO C.1 960/50-3.

90. 'All Saints, Moreton', pp.226 & 229.

91. ERO D/P 27/5 passim.

92. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.26r.

93. PRO STAC.2 9 fo.159r.

94. PRO STAC.2 23/35; Brigden, 'Soc. Obligation', p.88.

95. PRO STAC.2 33/55.

96. PRO STAC.2 20/26 & 20/100.

97. PRO STAC.2 20/26.

98. PRO STAC.2 20/100.

99. PRO SP.1 39 fos.49-51; L.& P., vol.4ii, no.2385.

100. Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428-31. ed. N.P. Tanner (C.S., 4th Series, 20, 1977) [hereafter Norwich Heresy Trials], pp.146, 152-3 & 181-9.

101. J. Foxe. Acts and Monuments. ed. A Clarke (London, n.d.) [hereafter Foxe], pp.105-6.

102. BL Harl.MS.421 fos.11-35: L.& P.. iv pt.ii. nos.4029, 4030, 4175, 4218, 4242, 4254, 4545 & 4850.

103. Norwich Heresy Trials, p.28.

104. A. Hudson, The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History (Oxford, 1988) [hereafter Hudson, Premature Ref.], pp.464-5 & 474-80; J.F. Davis, Heresy and the Reformation in the South-East of England, 1520-1559 (London, 1983) [hereafter Davis, Heresy & Ref.], pp.57-9 & 61-2.

105. Foxe, pp.105-6.

106. D. Plumb, 'The Social and Economic Spread of Rural Lollardy: A Reappraisal', Voluntary Religion, eds. W.J. Sheils & D. Wood (Studies in Church History, 23, 1986) [hereafter Plumb, 'Rural Lollardy'], p.121.

107. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.25r.

108. L.& P., iv pt.ii, no.4218.

109. e.g. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.11r.

110. e.g. BL Harl.MS.421 fos.24-5.

111. Norwich Heresy Trials, pp.10-12; Brigden, London.

p.91; Hudson, Premature Ref.. p.408; A.G. Dickens, Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1558 (Oxford, 1959) [hereafter Dickens, Lollards & Prots.]. pp.9-10; J. Fines, 'Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Coventry and Lichfield, 1511-12', J.E.H. 14 (1963) [hereafter Fines, 'Heresy Trials'], pp.166-7.

112. BL Harl.MS.421 fos.18r. & 28v.

113. BL Harl.MS.421 fos.17v. & 22v.

114. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.24r.

115. BL Harl.MS.421 fos.18 & 28. Ember-days are the Wednesday, Friday and Saturday in each quarter following the first Sunday of Lent, Whitsunday, Holy Cross Day (14 Sept.) and St Lucia's Day (13 Dec.).

116. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.22v.

117. Norwich Heresy Trials, pp.12-18; Hudson, Premature Ref.. pp.408-9; Fines, 'Heresy Trials', p.166; Brigden, London. pp.94-5; Dickens, Lollards & Prots.. p.9.

118. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.28r.

119. L.& P.. iv pt.ii, no.4242.

120. Foxe, pp.221-2. Cromwell's 'Remembrances' include an entry in 1534, 'Of them that burned the Rode of Dovencourt in Essex', but provide no further details (L.& P., vii, no.923xxvi).

121. Foxe, p.222.

122. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.24r.

123. L.& P., iv pt.ii, no.4218.

124. Norwich Heresy Trials, pp.28-9; Brigden, London, pp.88-9; Fines, 'Heresy Trials', pp.164-5.

125. BL Harl.MS.421 fos.21r.,23r. & 24v.

126. BL.Harl.MS.421 fos.17-18; later Lollard books are discussed in Hudson, Premature Ref., pp.483-94.

127. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.21r; Fines, 'Heresy Trials', p.164.

128. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.17v.

129. L.& P., iv pt.ii, no.4218; Norwich Heresy Trials, pp.11 & 17.

130. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.21v.

131. BL Harl.MS.421 fos.9-10; L.& P., iv pt.ii, no.3267.

132. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.35; L.& P., iv pt.ii, nos.4218 & 4850.

133. M Aston, 'Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival?', History 49 (1964) [hereafter Aston, 'Survival or Revival?'], passim.

134. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.18r.

135. Hudson, Premature Ref., p.496; G.R.Elton, Policy and Police: The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell (Cambridge, 1972) [hereafter Elton, Policy & Police], p.24.

136. Hudson, Premature Ref., pp.478-9; Davis, Heresy & Ref., p.59.

137. Hudson, Premature Ref., p.495.

138. Aston, 'Survival or Revival?', p.162.

139. BL Harl.MS.421 fos.14v. & 17r.

140. BL Harl.MS.421 fos.11r. & 34r.

141. Norwich Heresy Trials, pp.26-8; Fines, 'Heresy Trials', p.165; Plumb, 'Rural Lollardy', passim; A. Hope, 'Lollardy: The Stone the Builders Rejected?', Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England, eds. P. Lake & M. Dowling (London, 1987) [hereafter Hope, 'Lollardy'], p.10.

142. Hope, 'Lollardy', p.24.

143. PRO SP.1 239 fo.160r.; L.& P., Addenda, ii, no.985(5).

144. Harper-Bill, Pre-Ref. Ch., p.44).

145. Brigden, London, p.61.

146. L.& P., i pt.ii, pp.1529 & 1531.

147. PRO E.301/19 no.10.

148. PRO SP.1 239 fo.160r.

149. PRO E.301/19 nos.5, 8, 12, 25, 26, 29, 30, 36b, 37, 40, 41 & 52.

150. PRO E.301/19 nos.3, 15, 18, 32 & 38.

151. Brigden, 'Soc. Obligation', p.80.

152. N. Pevsner, The Buildings of England: Essex (London, 1954), passim.

153. Heath, 'Urban Piety', p.229.

CHAPTER TWO: THE HENRICIAN REFORMATION

1. PRO SP.1 130 fos.151-2; L.& P., xiii pt.i, no.615.
2. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People, pp.60-1.
3. ERO D/P 27/5 fos.8-40.
4. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.14r.
5. R. Hutton, 'The Local Impact of the Tudor Reformations', The English Reformation Revised, ed. C. Haigh (Cambridge, 1987) [hereafter Hutton, 'Local Impact'], p.116.
6. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.18r.
7. See Appendix 1.
8. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.5v.
9. ERO D/P 27/5 fos.25-38.
10. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.31r.
11. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.23v.
12. ERO D/P 27/5 fos.4r., 7r., 10r., 13r., 15v. & 24r.
13. ERO D/P 27/5 fos.37r. & 38v.
14. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.27r.
15. Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.123.
16. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.30v., 34r., 35r. & 38r.
17. See Appendix 1.
18. ERO D/ABW 33/80, D/AEW 1/403 & D/AEW 2/28.
19. ERO D/AEW 2/30, D/AEW 2/31, D/AEW 2/143 & D/AEW 2/190.
20. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.12-14, 17-18, 21-2 & 25-6.

21. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.20-2.

22. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.23r.

23. PRO SP.1 76 fo.24r.: L.& P., vi. no.448.

24. PRO SP.1 158 fo.105r.: L.& P., xv, no.394; Oxley, Ref. in Essex, p.133. That this petition was addressed to Sir Anthony Denny should be noted. He has been described as one of the great sponsors of the evangelical cause at Henry's court (M. Dowling, 'The Gospel and the Court: Reformation under Henry VIII', Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England, eds. P. Lake & M. Dowling (London, 1987) [hereafter Dowling, 'Gospel & Court'], pp.49, 64-6 & 71). In spite of his Reformist sympathies, however, it is likely that the petition was addressed to him simply because he was a powerful courtier.

25. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.12r., 16v. & 26r.

26. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.27-8.

27. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.24v.

28. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.27r.

29. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.34.

30. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.21r.

31. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.12r.

32. ERO D/P 27/5 fos.24v. & 31v.

33. ERO D/P 27/5 fos.37-8.

34. ERO D/ABW 31/32, D/ABW 37/33, D/AEW 1/386, D/AEW

1/446 & D/AEW 2/81.

35. Eng.Hist.Docs., vol.5, no.115.

36. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.29-30.

37. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.31r.

38. ERO D/P 27/5 fos.20r. & 25r.

39. See Appendix 1.

40. C. Haigh, 'The English Reformation: A Premature Birth, a Difficult Labour and a Sickly Child', H.J. 33 (1990), p.455.

41. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.30r. & 31v.

42. ERO D/P 27/5 fos.27v. & 31v.; Tudor Procs., i, no.200.

43. 34 & 35 Hen.VIII c.1.

44. Elton, Policy & Police. pp.243-62.

45. ERO D/ACA 1 f.91r.

46. ERO D/ACA 1 fos.130r., 136v. & 138v.; D/ACA 2 fos.30r., 56v. & 58r.

47. ERO D/ACA 1 fo.90v.

48. PRO SP.1 99 fo.203v.

49. PRO SP.1 99 fos.201v. & 203; E.36 120 fo.60.

50. PRO SP.2 R fo.21r.

51. For similar cases from the pre-Reformation period see Harper-Bill, Pre-Ref. Ch., pp.50-1.

52. ERO D/ACA fos.94r., 131r. & 134v.; Burgess, 'Chantries', pp.50-9.

53. ERO D/ACA 2 fo.30r.; D/ACA 1 fo.138v.

54. ERO D/ACA 2 fo.56r.

55. ERO D/ACA 1 fo.115r.

56. See Appendix 1.

57. ERO D/AEW 1/348.

58. ERO D/AEW 2/27, D/ABW 16/29 & D/ACR 3 fo.120v.

59. Kreider, Eng. Chantries. p.84.

60. ERO D/AEW 1/299.

61. Kreider, Eng Chantries. pp.104-6.

62. PRO SP.1 99 fos.202-3.

63. Eng.Hist.Docs.. v, no.112; Kreider, Eng. Chantries. pp.122-4.

64. Kreider, Eng. Chantries. p.127.

65. ERO D/AEW 2/101.

66. L.& P.. i, no.2772 (57), iii, no.2993 & xvii, no.443 (36); ERO T/A 401/2.

67. ERO T/A 401/2 fo.2.

68. ERO T/A 401/2 fo.9.

69. ERO D/ACA 1 fos.45r., 59v. & 130v.; D/ACA 2 fo.24v.

70. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.25v.

71. ERO D/P 27/5 fos.10r., 23v. & 27r.

72. ERO D/P 27/5 fos.31r., 33v., 35v., 37r. & 40r.

73. PRO E.301/20 nos.57-60: these are a chantry and free chapel in East Tilbury, and chantries in Wivenhoe, Barking and Colchester.

74. L.& P.. xix pt.i, g.80 (22).

75. Kreider, Eng. Chantries. pp.154-6.

76. 37 Hen.VIII c.4; Kreider, Eng. Chantries. Chapter 7.

77. L.& P.. xx pt.ii, no.902.

78. ERO D/ACA 1 fos.45r., 72r., 91v., 93v., 133 134r. & 136r.; D/ACA 2 fos.23v., 27v., 55r. & 60r.

79. PRO C.1 311/13-14, 351/9-11, 364/66-70, 460/54-5, 624/10, 636/19-21 & 811/38-40.

80. ERO D/P 27/5 passim: from 1539/40 the obit is referred to as being for Margaret Payn, but as the cost and the position in the accounts are the same as they had been for Margaret Champnes's obit it is probable that the same thing is being referred to. Perhaps one surname was Margaret's married, and the other her maidan, name; alternatively, she may have had two husbands.

81. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.27v.

82. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.32-8.

83. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.33r.

84. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.40r.

85. PRO SP.1 112 fos.244-5; L.& P.. xi, no.1319. Neville was a brother of John, Lord Latimer (Elton, Policy & Police. p.65). Other brothers were in trouble with the authorities during the 1530s, including Thomas Neville at Aldham (SP.1 124 fos.193-6; Elton, Policy & Police. pp.371-2).

86. PRO SP.1 68 fo.148r.; L.& P.. v, no.649.

87. PRO SP.1 104 fo.300r.; L.& P.. x, no.1264.

88. Elton, Policy & Police. pp.171-210.
89. PRO SP.1 83 fo.38r.; L.& P.. vii, no.406; Elton, Policy & Police. pp.176-83 & 209.
90. PRO SP.1 82 fo.152r.; L.& P.. vii, no.140.
91. PRO SP.1 99 fos.200-4; L.& P.. ix, no.1059.
92. PRO SP.1 152 fo.79r.; L.& P.. xiv pt.i, no.1126.
93. PRO SP.1 116 fos.7-10; L.& P.. xii pt.i, no.407.
94. Brigden, London. pp.248-54.
95. PRO SP.1 112 fo.244v.
96. L.& P.. xii pt.ii, no.703.
97. PRO E.36 120 fos.59-63; L.& P.. vii, no.145.
98. PRO SP.1 150 fo.203r.; L.& P.. xiv pt.i, no.863.
99. Brigden, London. p.241.
100. Dowling, 'Gospel & Court', p.36.
101. PRO SP.1 99 fo.202v.
102. Brigden, London. p.255.
103. Elton, Policy & Police. esp. Chapters 1 & 3.
104. ibid.. pp.286-7.
105. PRO SP.1 100 fo.29r.; L.& P.. ix, no.1099.
106. Brigden, 'Soc. Obligation', p.82.
107. PRO SP.1 100 fo.73r.; L.& P.. ix, no.1115.
108. BL Harl.MS.421 fo.17r.; Hudson, Premature Ref.. p.479.
109. PRO E.36 120 fo.60r.
110. ERO D/ACA fo.5v.
111. PRO SP.1 83 f.38r.

112. PRO SP.1 99 f.201r.; Brigden, London, p.279.

113. PRO SP.2 R fo.21r.; L.& P., viii, no.625.

114. PRO E.36 120 fo.60r.

115. PRO SP.1 99 fos.202r. & 203.

116. PRO E.36 120 fo.60v.

117. PRO SP.1 99 fos.203-4.

118. The possibility that charges of conservatism were used to get rid of the unpopular is mooted in Brigden, London, p.278. For Cromwell's carefulness, see Elton, Policy & Police, pp.350-60.

119. A.P.C., vol.1, p.282.

120. Brigden, London, p.329.

121. Dowling, 'Gospel & Court', pp.58 & 67-70.

122. Elton, Policy & Police, pp.383-400.

123. Tudor Procs., i, no.191.

124. This proclamation was not issued, for it was superseded in June 1539 by the Act of Six Articles, which sought to abolish diversity of opinion in religious matters and was a victory for the conservative faction (31 Hen.VIII c.14; S. Brigden, 'Popular Disturbance and the Fall of Thomas Cromwell and the Reformers, 1539-1540', H.J. 24 (1981), pp.261-2).

125. L.& P., xix pt.ii, no.805. This Robert Ward is not the former friar who preached Reformed doctrines in Essex in the 1530s. No connection between the two

is made by J.F. Davis, who describes Ward of Thaxted as 'A proletarian expounder of Scripture who was caught up in the period of reaction' (Davis, Heresy & Ref., p.95).

126. Brigden, London. p.275.

127. G.R. Elton, Reform and Reformation: England 1509-1558 (London, 1977) [hereafter Elton, Reform & Ref.]. pp.328-9.

128. PRO SP.1 218 fos.139-40; L.& P., xxi pt.i, no.836; A.P.C., vol.1, p.418.

129. A.P.C., vol.1, p.464.

130. Foxe, p.286; Dickens, Lollards & Prots., p.33.

131. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People. pp.80-1.

132. PRO E.36 120 fo.60v.

CHAPTER THREE: THE REFORMATION DURING THE REIGN OF EDWARD

1. Elton, Reform & Ref., p.367.

2. Tudor Procs., 1, no.287; Elton, Reform & Ref., p.339; A.G. Dickens, The English Reformation (London, 1964) [hereafter Dickens, Eng. Ref.]. p.281.

3. 1 Edw.VI c.14.

4. Dickens, Eng. Ref., pp.281-2.

5. ibid., pp.301-2.

6. ibid., pp.302-4; Elton, Reform & Ref., pp.345-6.

7. Dickens, Eng. Ref.. p.337.
8. Ibid., pp.330-1; Elton, Reform & Ref.. p.360.
9. Dickens, Eng. Ref.. pp.339-43; Elton, Reform & Ref.. pp.360-1.
10. Dickens, Eng. Ref.. pp.349-51.
11. Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.119.
12. ERO D/P 27/5 fos.40-1.
13. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.39-41.
14. Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.122.
15. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.41v.
16. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.44r.
17. Kreider, Eng. Chantries. p.186.
18. 37 Hen.VIII c.4; Kreider, Eng. Chantries. pp.169-80.
19. 1 Edw.VI c.14; Kreider, Eng. Chantries. pp.190-3.
20. C.P.R.. Edw.VI, ii, p.135; the returns are found in PRO E.301/19.
21. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.41v.
22. C.P.R.. Eliz.I, vi, p.40 & viii, p.97.
23. C.J. Kitching, 'The Quest for Concealed Lands in the Reign of Elizabeth I', T.R.H.S.. 5th Series, 24 (1974), pp.63-78.
24. PRO E.301/19 nos.4, 36, 79 & 88; the property was eventually granted by the crown in 1570 (C.P.R.. Eliz.I, v, p.39).
25. PRO E.301/19 no.31; C.P.R.. Eliz.I, v, pp.39 & 348.
26. PRO E.301/19 no.36; C.P.R.. Edw.VI, i, pp.413-4.

27. L.& P.. xix pt.i, g.80 (22); C.P.R., Edw.VI, v, p.226.

28. E. Dickin, 'Embezzled Church Goods of Essex', T.E.A.S.. N.S. 13 (1913-14) [hereafter Dickin, 'Embezzled Goods'], p.169.

29. H. King, 'Inventories of Church Goods, 6th Edw.VI', T.E.A.S.. N.S. 1 (1878) [hereafter King, 'Ch. Inventories'], p.28.

30. BL Stowe MS.827 fo.28r.. No guildhall was mentioned in the Chantry Certificates of either 1545 or 1547; however, one was granted by the crown early in Edward's reign (C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, p.366). Whether or not the parish had intended to conceal the guildhall and use it as an almshouse is unknown. It seems, however, that the guildhall was soon discovered by the authorities and was purchased by the parish from William Berners, to whom the crown had granted it in 1549.

31. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People, pp.129-30.

32. C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, pp.211-2; ERO T/A 401/2.

33. PRO E.301/19 no.36b; C.P.R., Edw.VI, iii, p.119.

34. V.C.H., Essex, ii, pp.510, 514-5, 516 & 527-8.

35. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People, pp.112-21.

36. V.C.H., Essex, ii, pp.501, 502 & 518-22.

37. C.P.R., Edw.VI, iv, pp.116-7.

38. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People, pp.117-21; V.C.H.,

Essex, ii, pp.510-11.

39. The changes under Edward left a clear mark on churchwardens' accounts. However, the time when these occurred is often not given, and it is impossible to discern how the alterations were regarded. The extant accounts, too, provide certain problems. Those from Great Dunmow provide a single set of accounts from January 1547 to May 1551, and the next set last from 1551 to 1559 (ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.39-44). The Broomfield accounts cover only 1553 and they reveal more about the return to Catholicism during the first few months of Mary's reign than about the Reformation under Edward (ERO D/P 248/5/1 fos.4-5). The accounts from Great Hallingbury cover all of Edward's reign, but from 1553 only the total income and expenditure are given, with no details (ERO D/P 27/5 fos.40-4). The most extensive accounts come from Harwich and these often record the date of a payment; however, they begin in 1550, by which time many of the Edwardian changes had been made (ERO T/A 105 fos.1-43).

40. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.40-1.

41. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.43v.

42. Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.125.

43. See Chapter Four, Section One.

44. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.41r.

45. Dickens, Eng. Ref., p.302.

46. Dickin, 'Embezzled Goods', pp.162 & 163.

47. Ibid., p.161.

48. King, 'Ch. Inventories', T.E.A.S., N.S. 3 (1885-9), p.45.

49. King, 'Ch. Inventories', T.E.A.S., O.S. 4 (1869), p.227 & N.S. 2 (1884), p.173.

50. King, 'Ch. Inventories', T.E.A.S., O.S. 5 (1873), p.225; W.C. Waller, 'Inventories of Church Goods. 6 Edward VI', T.E.A.S., N.S. 11 (1909-10), p.207; Brigden, London, p.429.

51. King, 'Ch. Inventories', T.E.A.S., O.S. 5 (1873), pp.222 & 235.

52. Hutton, 'Local Impact', pp.121-2.

53. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.42r.; D/P 11/5/1 fo.41r.; T/A 105 fo.34r.; D/P 248/5/1 fo.4r.. It is worth noting that two of the four Essex parishes for which extensive churchwardens' accounts from the reign of Edward remain record having bought the Book of Homilies. In his national survey Dr. Hutton found only nineteen such purchases from a sample of ninety-one parishes (Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.124).

54. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.43r.

55. ERO T/A 242 fo.26r.; D/P 11/5/1 fos.39-40; T/A 105 fos.3-4, 6-8, 17v. & 22.

56. ERO T/A 105 fo.33.

57. King, 'Ch. Inventories', T.E.A.S., N.S. 2 (1884), pp.241-5.
58. King, 'Ch. Inventories', T.E.A.S., O.S. 4 (1869), pp.215, 222 & 224-5 & T.E.A.S., O.S. 5 (1873), pp.122 & 130.
59. See below, Section Four.
60. A.P.C., iii, p.335.
61. Dickin, 'Embezzled Goods', pp.159, 162 & 165.
62. Dickens, Eng. Ref., p.337; H. Greive, 'The Deprived Married Clergy in Essex, 1553-1561', T.R.H.S., 4th Series, 22 (1940) [hereafter Grieve, 'Deprived Clergy'], pp.141-69; D.M. Palliser, 'Popular Reactions to the Reformation during the Years of Uncertainty 1530-70', Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I, eds. F. Heal & R. O'Day (London, 1977) [hereafter Palliser, 'Pop. Reactions'], p.42.
63. ERO D/AEW 2/294.
64. See Appendix 1.
65. ERO D/ABW 3/224 & D/AER 5 fo.160r.
66. ERO D/AEW 2/261, D/AEW 2/290 & D/AEW 2/370; Tudor Procs., 1, no.287.
67. ERO D/AEW 2/195.
68. ERO D/AEW 2/199 & D/AEW 2/223.
69. Haigh, Ref. & Resistance, pp.152-3.
70. ERO D/AEW 2/270.

71. ERO D/AEW 2/309.
72. ERO D/AEW 2/247.
73. ERO D/AEW 2/223, D/AEW 2/269, D/AEW 2/309 & D/AEW 2/342.
74. ERO D/AEW 2/207.
75. ERO D/AEW 2/172, D/AEW 2/200, D/AEW 2/246 & D/AEW 2/249.
76. ERO T/A 105 f.27r.
77. A.P.C., iii, p.53.
78. ibid., iii, pp.198-9; J. Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials. ii pt.i, pp.369-70.
79. Dickens, Eng. Ref., pp.327-8; C. Cross, Church and People 1450-1660 (London, 1976), pp.98-9.
80. Tudor Procs., i, no.287.
81. Elton, Reform & Ref., p.355; C.S.L. Davies, Peace, Print and Protestantism 1450-1558 (London, 1976) [hereafter Davies, Peace, Print & Prot.], pp.285-6.
82. Brigden, London, pp.481-2.
83. King, 'Ch. Inventories', T.E.A.S., N.S. 1 (1878), p.15.
84. C.P.R., Edw.VI, iv, p.294.

CHAPTER FOUR: RELIGION DURING THE REIGN OF MARY

1. ERO D/P 248/5/1 fos.4-5.
2. Tudor Procs., ii, no.390; Hutton, 'Local Impact',

p.127; Brigden, London. p.530.

3. ERO D/P 248/5/1 fos.6-7. These accounts are said to have been made 'the xxth daye of June in the fifte and sixt yere of Phillipe and Quene Marie'. Edward VI died on 6 July 1553, so 20 June 5 & 6 Philip and Mary would have been in 1559, which was in fact the first year of Elizabeth's reign. It is likely that the scribe made a mistake with the regnal year, and that the accounts were delivered in June 1558.
4. ERO D/P 248/5/1 fo.14r.
5. Tudor Procs.. ii, no.407.
6. Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.130.
7. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.42r. & 43r.; D/P 27/5 fos.45r. & 48r.; D/P 44/5 fo.46; D/P 94/5/1 fo.3.
8. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.42-4; D/P 27/5 fos.45-8; D/P 44/5 fos.46, 49, 52, 55 & 56; D/P 94/5/1 fos.2-4; D/P 248/5/1 fos.4-7; T/A 105 fos.57-109; T/A 242 fo.26r.
9. ERO D/P 44/5 fo.51.
10. A.P.C.. iv, p.338.
11. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.42r.; D/P 27/5 fo.45r.
12. A.P.C.. iv, p.411.
13. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.44r.; T/A 105 fo.108v.
14. ERO T/A 401/2 fo.41.
15. ERO T/A 401/2 fo.16: L.& P., iii, no.2993: V.C.H.. Essex, ii, pp.518-22.
16. C.P.R.. P.& M., ii, p.119. These lands are recorded

in the Edwardian Cantry Certificates (PRO E.301/19 no.42), and were finally secularised during the reign of Elizabeth (C.P.R., Eliz.I, iv, p.353).

17. PRO C.1 1407 nos.52-4. Such property does appear in the Edwardian Chantry Certificates (PRO E.301/19 no.108).
18. Elton, Reform & Ref., p.384.
19. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People, p.132.
20. The next five paragraphs are based primarily on Grieve, 'Deprived Clergy', pp.141-69.
21. Tudor Procs., ii, no.407.
22. Grieve, 'Deprived Clergy', passim; Foxe, pp.690-4 & 741-8; A.P.C., v, p.89; C. Garrett, The Marian Exiles: A Study in the Origins of Elizabethan Puritanism (Cambridge, 1938) [hereafter Garrett, Marian Exiles], pp.71, 145, 165 & 247.
23. Grieve, 'Deprived Clergy', p.153.
24. ibid., p.160.
25. ibid., p.142-3.
26. R.H. Pogson, 'The Legacy of Schism: Confusion, Continuity and Change in the Marian Clergy', The Mid-Tudor Polity, c.1540-1560, eds. J. Loach & R. Tittler (Basingstoke, 1980) [hereafter Pogson, 'Legacy of Schism'], pp.128-30.
27. See Appendix 1.
28. ERO D/AEW 3/73.

29. ERO D/ABW 39/162, D/ABR 1 fo.59r., D/AEW 3/113, D/AEW 3/118 & D/AEW 3/191.
30. ERO D/AEW 3/108.
31. ERO D/ABW 21/51, D/AEW 3/44, D/AEW 3/115 & D/AEW 3/151.
32. ERO D/AEW 3/62 & D/AEW 3/96.
33. ERO D/AEW 3/29 & D/ABW 4/105.
34. C.P.R.. P.& M., iii, p.363.
35. C.P.R.. P.& M., iv, pp.91-3.
36. C.P.R.. P.& M., ii, pp.41-2 & iii, pp.542-3.
37. V.C.H.. Essex, ii, pp.531-2.
38. C.P.R.. P.& M.. iv. pp.225-6; V.C.H.. Essex, ii, p.528.
39. Davies, Peace, Print & Prot., p.246.
40. ERO T/A 105 fos.73v. & 84r.
41. ERO D/AEW 3/297.
42. ERO T/A 105 fo.96r.; Brigden, London. p.555.
43. A.G. Dickens, 'The Early Expansion of Protestantism in England 1520-1558', Archiv fur Reformationsgeschichte 78 (1987) [hereafter Dickens, 'Early Expansion'], p.197.
44. Garrett, Marian Exiles. pp.271 & 316.
45. Chapter Three, Section Four.
46. Whilst in Colchester Upchar took a leading role in trying to enforce high moral conduct and advocated the harsh punishment of offenders. This provoked

some hostility, and he was the subject of a sustained libel campaign; see M.S. Byford, 'The Price of Protestantism: Assessing the Impact of Religious Change on Elizabethan Essex: The Cases of Heydon and Colchester, 1558-1594' (D.Phil., Oxford, 1988), pp.194-225.

47. D.M. Loades, 'The Essex Inquisitions of 1556', B.I.H.R. 35 (1962) [hereafter Loades, 'Essex Inquisitions'], pp.87-97.

48. Garrett, Marian Exiles, p.137.

49. ERO D/AEW 4/54. Sckill's surname suggests that he might have been of Flemish or German origin.

50. Brigden, London, p.561.

51. Loades, 'Essex Inquisitions', pp.94-6.

52. Foxe, p.834.

53. ibid., p.799. All twenty-two did not escape, however, for five were later apprehended again and burnt (ibid., pp.830-4).

54. ibid., p.831.

55. A.P.C., iv, p.395.

56. A.P.C., v, pp.110 & 150; Elton, Reform & Ref., p.383; Foxe, pp.690-4.

57. A.P.C., v, p.312.

58. Foxe, p.834.

59. ERO Q/SR 2/15.

60. Foxe, p.760.

61. ibid.. p.742.
62. ibid.. pp.742, 758 & 830.
63. Brigden, London. pp.566-7.
64. Foxe, pp.485 & 830.
65. Loades, 'Essex Inquisitions', pp.93-6.
66. Dickens, 'Early Expansion', pp.197-8.
67. ibid.. p.199.
68. Chapter Two, Section Three.
69. Foxe, pp.479-84.
70. ibid.. pp.840-2.
71. Chapter One, Section Five.
72. W.J. Sheils, The English Reformation 1530-1570 (Harlow, 1989), p.9.
73. Foxe, pp.446-50.
74. ibid.. p.484.
75. ibid.. pp.843-4.
76. ERO Q/SR 2/16.
77. A.P.C.. v, pp.104, 141 & 153.
78. ERO T/A 105 fo.63v.
79. Foxe, pp.450, 454 & 484.
80. ibid.. p.759.
81. D.M. Loades, The Oxford Martyrs (London, 1970) [hereafter Loades, Oxford Martyrs]. p.154.
82. ibid.. p.124.
83. Foxe, p.833.
84. A.P.C.. vi, p.135; Loades, Oxford Martyrs. p.242.

85. A.P.C., vi, p.144.
86. Tudor Procs., ii, no.390.
87. Pogson, 'Legacy of Schism', p.117.

CHAPTER FIVE: RELIGION IN ESSEX IN THE 1560s

1. Tudor Procs., ii, no.451.
2. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fo.10r.; Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.133.
3. Hutton, 'Local Impact', pp.133-4.
4. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.44-5; D/P 44/5 nos.22 & 53.
5. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.10 & 17; T/A 105 fos.114-31.
6. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.44-7; D/P 27/5 fo.49r.; D/P 29/5 fo.2r; D/P 94/5/1 fos.9-16; D/P 248/5/1 fos.8-9; D/P 277/5/1 fos.2-6; T/A 105 fos.117-31.
7. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.44-7.
8. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.9-33.
9. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.49v.; D/P 44/5 nos.7i, 22 & 53; D/P 248/5/1 fos.9-12 & 18; D/P 277/5/1 fos.2-11; T/A 105 fos.114-51.
10. Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.134.
11. Tudor Procs., ii, nos.469, 486 & 635.
12. Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.135.
13. ERO D/AEV 1 fo.4r.
14. ERO D/AEA 5 fos.75v., 76r. & 79-80.
15. ERO D/ACA 3 fos.87v., 97r. & 107r.

16. F.G. Emmison, Elizabethan Life: Morals and the Church Courts (Chelmsford, 1973) [hereafter Emmison, Morals]. pp.177-8; P. Collinson, 'The Elizabethan Church and the New Religion', The Reign of Elizabeth I, ed. C. Haigh (Basingstoke, 1984) [hereafter Collinson, 'Eliz. Ch.'], p.170.
17. ERO D/AEA 2 fo.77r.; D/AEA 4 fo.20r.
18. ERO D/AEA 1a fo.21r.; D/AEA 2 fo.11r.
19. ERO D/P 29/5 fos.1-3; D/AEV 1 fo.17v.
20. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.26-42; T/A 242 fo.26r.
21. ERO D/P 277/5/1 fo.9r.
22. Tudor Procs., ii, no.460.
23. ERO D/AEV 1 fos. 3v., 8r., 11r., 12, 13r., 14r., 17v. & 23v.
24. ERO D/AEA 4 fo.51v.; D/AEA 5 fo.62r.
25. ERO D/ACA 3 fos.38, 41v. & 53v.
26. ERO D/P 27/5 fo.50v.; D/P 248/5/1 fo.14r.; D/P 277/5/1 fo.12v.
27. Emmison, Morals, p.257.
28. Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.137.
29. ERO D/AEA 5 fo.12v.
30. ERO D/AEV 1 fo.9r.
31. ERO D/AEV 1 fo.22v.; D/AEA 5 fo.80r.
32. ERO D/AEM 4 fo.1.
33. Tudor Procs., ii, no.460.
34. Collinson, Relig. of Prots., pp.102-7.

35. ERO D/AEA 2 fos.6r. & 109v.; D/AEA 4 fo.35r.; D/AEV 1 fos.11r. & 28v.; D/ABR 4 (folios unnumbered).
36. ERO D/AEA 2 fo.6r.; Tudor Procs., ii, no.460.
37. ERO D/AEA 2 fo.75r.
38. ERO D/AEA 2 fos.76v. & 78r.; D/AEV 1 fo.18v.
39. ERO Q/SR 26/45; Q/SR 26/46; Q/SR 34/18; Q/SR 34/23; Q/SR 34/24; Q/SR 35/20.
40. Cal.Ass.Recs., no.277.
41. W.J. Pressey, 'State of the Church in Essex in 1563', Essex Review 46 (1937), pp.144-57.
42. ibid., p.154. Many Colchester churches were poorly endowed, for it was stated that they were vacat propter exilitatem, and Professor Collinson has questioned how easy it was to integrate Colchester into the Church's parochial structure (P. Collinson, Archbishop Grindal 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church (London, 1979) [hereafter Collinson, Grindal], p.115).
43. ERO D/AEV 1 fos.8v., 11v. & 23v.
44. Tudor Procs., ii, nos.460 & 461.
45. Collinson, 'Eliz. Ch.', p.179.
46. ibid., p.185; C. Haigh, 'The Church of England, the Catholics and the People', The Reign of Elizabeth I, ed. C. Haigh (Basingstoke, 1984) [hereafter Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People'], pp.206-7.
47. Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', pp.207-8; B. Reay,

'Popular Religion', Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England. ed. B. Reay (London, 1985) [hereafter Reay, 'Pop. Relig.'], p.97.

48. ERO D/AEV 1 fos.5v. & 20v.; Collinson, 'Eliz. Ch.', p.183.
49. Collinson, 'Eliz. Ch.', pp.181-3; Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', p.209.
50. Tudor Procs.. ii, no.460; Collinson, 'Eliz. Ch.', p.185.
51. ERO D/AEA 2 fo.81v.
52. Hunt, Puritan Moment. p.92.
53. Collinson, 'Eliz. Ch.', p.187.
54. ERO D/AEV 1 fos.3v., 4r., 6, 8v., 9, 13r. & 15r.; Emmison, Morals. p.185.
55. ERO T/A 401/2 fos.54-68.
56. ERO D/AEV 1 fos.11v., 14r., 20r. & 23v.
57. ERO D/AEV 1 fo.22v.
58. ERO D/AEA 1a fo.11r.
59. ERO D/AEA 2 fos.61v. & 95v.; Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', p.198.
60. ERO D/AEA 4 fo.7r.; Tudor Procs.. ii, no.460.
61. ERO D/AEV 1 fo..12r.; D/AEA 4 fo.8r.; D/AEA 5 fo.18v.
62. Tudor Procs.. ii, no.460.
63. ERO D/AEV 1 fo.7v.
64. ERO D/AEA 4 fo.8r.; D/AEA 5 fo.12v.

65. ERO D/AEA 5 fos.16v, 18v. & 19r.

66. Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', p.211.

67. Tudor Procs., ii, no.460; S. Wright, 'Catechism, Confirmation and Communion: The Role of the Young in the Post-Reformation Church', Parish, Church and People, ed. S. Wright (London, 1988), pp.204-5.

68. ERO D/AEV 1 fos.10v. & 16v.; D/AEA 2 fo.35r.

69. Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', pp.210-11; Reay, 'Pop. Relig.', pp.97-8; Emmison, Morals, pp.142-3; Collinson, Relig. of Prots., p.234.

70. Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', p.211.

71. ERO D/AEV 1 fo.17r.; D/AEA 4 fo.8r.

72. ERO D/AEA 5 fos.5r. & 30r.

73. Cal.Ass.Recs., no.388. This case was transferred to the Queen's Bench in May 1569, but no record of it has been found there.

74. Tudor Procs., ii, no.460.

75. Collinson, Relig. of Prots., pp.31-2.

76. Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', p.218.

77. ERO D/P 248/5/1 fos.8r. & 10r.

78. ERO D/AEA 2 fo.92r.

79. ERO D/AEA 2 fo.30r.; D/AEV 1 fos.3v., 8v., 9v. & 15v.

80. ERO D/AEA 5 fos.6v., 16v., 35r. & 40r.; Emmison, Morals, p.188.

81. ERO D/AEA 2 fos.57v., 74r. & 93r.

82. Tudor Procs., ii, no.460.
83. ERO D/AEV 1 fos.7v., 10v., 11v., 13r. & 19v.; D/AEA 4 fo.45v.
84. Hutton, 'Local Impact', pp.135-6; Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', pp.196-7.
85. ERO D/ABR 4 (folios unnumbered); D/AEA 1a fos.26r. & 33v.; D/AEV 1 fo.4r.
86. Emmison, Morals, p.188.
87. ERO D/AEA 5 fo.35r.
88. Emmison, Morals, p.93.
89. ERO D/AEA 1a fo.27r.
90. ERO T/A 428 nos.2 & 3.
91. PRO SP.12 16 fos.115-23; C.S.P., Domestic Series (1547-1580), pp.173-4.
92. PRO SP.12 16 fo.123r.
93. ERO D/AEA 1a. f.22r.
94. ERO D/AEA 2 fos.3v. & 10r.
95. Cal.Ass.Recs., no.123.
96. ERO D/AEA 2 fos.90r. & 120.
97. ERO D/AEA 2 fos.17-18.
98. 23 Eliz.I c.1; Emmison, Morals, pp.93-6.
99. F.G. Emmison, Elizabethan Life: Disorder (Chelmsford, 1970) [hereafter Emmison, Disorder], pp.46-8.
100. Emmison, Morals, p.93.
101. ibid., p.95.

102. 1959-, in progress.

103. See Appendix 1.

104. ERO D/AEW 4/24; D/AEW 4/107.

105. ERO D/ACR 6 fo.132v.

106. Collinson, 'Eliz. Ch.', p.170.

107. ERO D/AEW 4/75; D/ABR 4 fo.89r.

108. ERO D/AEW 4/275; D/AEW 5/167.

109. Tudor Procs., ii, no.460.

110. W.K. Jordan. Philanthropy in England 1480-1660 (London, 1959) [hereafter Jordan. Philanthropy]. p.18.

111. Haigh, 'Chh., Caths. & People', pp.213-4; Collinson, Relig. of Prots., p.202.

112. Jordan, Philanthropy. pp.16 & 20.

113. ERO D/AEV 1 fos.12v., 15v. & 22v.

114. ERO D/AEV 1 fos.10r., 12r. & 15r.

115. Tudor Procs., ii, p.460.

116. ERO D/AEV 1 fo.10r.

117. Tudor Procs., ii, no.460.

118. ERO D/AEA 5 fo.4v.

119. Collinson, Relig. of Prots., pp.224-30.

120. ERO D/AEV 1 fo.21v.

121. ERO D/AEA 2 fo.17v.; D/AEA 4 fo.3r.; D/AEV 1 fo.15v.; D/ACA 3 fos.25r. & 32r.

122. Tudor Procs., ii, no.460.

123. Collinson, Relig. of Prots., p.223.

124. Tudor Procs., ii, no.460.

125. Collinson, Relig. of Prots., pp.203-7.

126. ERO D/AEA 1a fos.21v. & 26v.; D/AEA 3 fo.72r.; D/AEA 4 fo.25r.; D/AEV 1 fo.11v.

127. ERO D/AEA 4 fo.12.

128. ERO D/AEA 2 fo.70r.; D/AEA 5 fo.17v.

129. ERO D/AEV 1 fo.10v.

130. ERO D/AEA 4 fo.8r.

131. Cal.Ass.Recs., nos.357 & 373; ERO Q/SR 11/4.

132. ERO D/AEA 4 fos.49r. & 51v.

133. Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', pp.214-8.

134. ERO D/AEA 1a fo.21v.

135. e.g. ERO D/AEA 2 fos.61r. & 116r.; D/AEA 4 fo.43r; D/AEA 5 fo.67v.; D/AEV 1 fos.4v. & 8r.; Q/SR 14/8; Q/SR 14/11; Q/SR 14/12; Q/SR 20/22; Cal.Ass.Recs., no.210. Other cases from the Elizabethan period are cited in Emmison, Disorder, pp.184-94 and Emmison, Morals, pp.111-30.

136. 5 Edw.VI c.4.

137. Reay, 'Pop. Relig.', pp.92-3; Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', p.208.

138. ERO D/AEV 1 fo.23v.; D/AEA 3 fo.77v.

139. Tudor Procs., ii, no.460.

140. ERO D/AEA 2 fo.11v.

141. ERO D/AEA 2 fo.60v.; D/AEA 5 fo.30r.

142. Tudor Procs., ii, no.460; Collinson, Relig. of

Prots., pp.242-7: Collinson, 'Eliz. Ch.', pp.192-4.

143. Collinson, Relig. of Prots., p.212.

144. ERO D/AEV 1 fo.6r.; D/AEA 2 fo.105r.; D/ACA 3 fos.17v. & 20v.

145. Reay, 'Pop. Relig.', p.110; Collinson, Relig. of Prots., pp.201-2.

146. Collinson, Relig. of Prots., Chapter Six.

147. Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', pp.218-19.

CHAPTER SIX: RELIGIOUS DRAMA AND COMMUNAL FESTIVALS IN SIXTEENTH-CENTURY ESSEX

1. W.A. Mepham, 'A General Survey of Medieval Drama in Essex in the Fifteenth Century', Essex Review 54 (1945), pp.52-3; for liturgical drama, see G. Wickham, The Medieval Theatre (3rd edn., Cambridge, 1987) [hereafter Wickham, Med. Theatre]. Chapter One.

2. E.C. Dunn, 'Popular Devotion in the Vernacular Drama of Medieval England', Medievalia et Humanistia 4 (1973), pp.55-68; Wickham, Med. Theatre, pp.72-95.

3. Wickham, Med. Theatre, p.77.

4. M. James, 'Ritual, Drama and the Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town', P.& P. 98 (1983) [hereafter James, 'Ritual, Drama & Soc. Body'], pp.12-13.

5. Thomas, Relig. & Magic. pp.53-5; Wickham, Med. Theatre. Chapter Four; C. Phythian-Adams, Local History and Folklore: A New Framework (London, 1975).

6. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.4-39. The dating of events in Great Dunmow's churchwardens' accounts poses some problems. There was no set time of the year when churchwardens were elected, nor was the length of their tenure standardised. For example, in 1530 the account was given and new churchwardens were elected on 21 October, while in 1541 the accounts were submitted 'the Ssunday next after plowe Munday', which is in early January. The first set of accounts state that the churchwardens who kept them had been elected 'upon ye dedicacion day the jere of owre lorde god mccccxxvj [1526]' (D/P 11/5/1 fo.2r.). The church in Great Dunmow is dedicated to St Mary, but on which of thew numerous holy days associated with the Virgin they were elected is unclear. However, St Mary's birthday was traditionally celebrated on 8 September, and in the 1530s those accounts that gave a month as well as a year that they were submitted all were made in September or October. Thus it is possible that these earlier accounts were also made in the Autumn. Robert Wright places the events recorded in this

first set of accounts in 1526 (R. Wright, 'The Medieval Theatre in some Essex Towns: Dunmow, Chelmsford, Maldon, Heybridge and Braintree', Essex Journal 9 (1974-5), pp.110-21). This means two things. First, he is assuming that the dedication day, and hence the election of the churchwardens, was in early January 1526 and before Plough Monday; this is unlikely. The other consequence of assuming that the festive events recorded in this first set of accounts occurred in 1526 is that Mr. Wright finds that there was no Corpus Christi Day celebration recorded in 1527, and neither a May Day celebration nor Corpus Christi event in either 1531 or 1535. Mr. Wright asserts that the absence of these celebrations in 1531 was because of the death of Wolsey, an unconvincing argument not least because the Cardinal had died in November 1530; he claims that the dissolution of Little Dunmow priory prompted the suspension of celebrations in 1535, but that priory was not in fact dissolved until 1536. My examination of these churchwardens' accounts has revealed no reference to May Day in 1535, and no record of Corpus Christi Day in 1539. Therefore, there was greater continuity in the dramatic activities of this parish than Mr. Wright has found.

7. For discussions of Corpus Christi in general, see

James, 'Ritual, Drama & Soc. Body', pp.3-29; Rubin, 'Corpus Christi', pp.15-21; M. Rubin, Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture (Cambridge, 1991), passim.

8. Rubin, 'Corpus Christi', p.18.
9. James, 'Ritual, Drama & Soc. Body', p.5.
10. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.6v.
11. A. Nelson, 'Some Configurations of Staging in Medieval English Drama', Medieval English Drama, eds. J. Taylor & A. Nelson (Chicago, 1972) [hereafter Nelson, 'Configurations of Staging'], p.118.
12. James, 'Ritual, Drama & Soc. Body', pp.5-6.
13. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.22v., 27v. & 36v.
14. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.19v.
15. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.27v. & 32r.
16. Wickham, Med. Theatre. p.92.
17. ibid., pp.66-9; James, 'Ritual, Drama & Soc. Body', pp.14-21.
18. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.11-35.
19. W.A. Mepham, 'Medieval Drama in Essex: Dunmow', Essex Review 55 (1946) [hereafter Mepham, 'Dunmow'], p.58.
20. CW Heybridge. p.41; Wickham, Med. Theatre. pp.103, 147 & 192.
21. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.24v. & 34r.

22. James, 'Ritual, Drama & Soc. Body', pp.5-6.
23. CW Heybridge, pp.42-4.
24. W.A. Mepham, 'Medieval Plays in the 16th Century at Heybridge and Braintree', Essex Review 55 (1946) [hereafter Mepham, 'Heybridge & Braintree'], p.11.
25. CW Heybridge, p.44. A kilderkin contained sixteen or eighteen gallons.
26. Bennett, 'Conviviality', pp.19-41.
27. CW Heybridge, p.44.
28. Wickham, Med. Theatre, p.185.
29. ibid., p.84; CW Heybridge, pp.43-4.
30. Mepham, 'Heybridge & Braintree', p.13; CW Heybridge, pp.43-4.
31. CW Heybridge, pp.43-4.
32. Wickham, Med. Theatre, p.193.
33. ERO T/A 242 fo.25.
34. ERO T/A 242 fo.25r.
35. W.A. Mepham, 'Municipal Drama at Maldon in the Sixteenth Century', Essex Review 55 (1946) [hereafter Mepham, 'Maldon'], p.169.
36. ERO D/B 3/3/236. The existence of this document suggests that detailed records of other years' performances were made but have been lost.
37. ERO D/B 3/3/236 fo.1r.
38. ERO D/B 3/3/236 fos.1-2.
39. ERO D/B 3/3/236 passim.

40. ERO D/B 3/3/236 fo.2v.
41. Wickham, Med. Theatre, p.80.
42. ERO D/B 3/3/236 fos.2-3.
43. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.27v., 29v. & 36v.
44. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.27v.
45. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.16v., 19, 22v. & 36r.
46. Wickham, Med. Theatre, p.139.
47. ibid., p.140-1; Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony & the Citizen', pp.248-9; P. Burke, Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (London, 1978) [hereafter Burke, Pop. Culture], p.194.
48. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.18v., 19r. & 29v.
49. ERO T/A 242 fo.25r.
50. PRO SP.1 99 fos.203-4.
51. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.7r., 11r., 29v. & 42r.
52. Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony & the Citizen', pp.242 & 250.
53. ibid., pp.250-2; Burke, Pop. Culture, pp.199-204.
54. CW Heybridge, p.28; ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.4r., 24v., 29r. & 30v.
55. ERO T/A 242 fo.25r.; D/AEW 1/276; Wickham, Med. Theatre, p.139; Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.117; T. Davidson, 'Plough Rituals in England and Scotland', Agricultural History Review 7 (1959), pp.31-6.
56. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.20v. & 23v.
57. King, 'Ch. Inventories', T.E.A.S., N.S. 2 (1884),

p.187.

58. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.31v.

59. Tudor Procs., i, no.203.

60. Wickham, Med. Theatre, p.6.

61. Chapter Two, Section One.

62. Hutton, 'Local Impact', pp.123-4.

63. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.29 & 34r.

64. Collinson, Relig. of Prots., pp.205-6 & n.63.

65. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.39v.

66. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.40.

67. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.39v.

68. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.40.

69. There are certain similarities between the records of these silver games and those of earlier Corpus Christi Day celebrations - the most obvious one is the list of contributing communities to both events - and previous studies have argued that the two events are the same. For example, Dr. Coldewey states: 'The word 'playe' was clearly used then, as now, to refer to games of chance and skill as well as to drama. Given the strength of the dramatic tradition in Dunmow, we may tentatively assume that some kind of play was performed' (J. Coldewey, 'Early Essex Drama: A History of its Rise and Fall and a Theory Concerning the Digby Plays' (Ph.D., University of Colorado, 1972) [hereafter Coldewey,

'Early Essex Drama'], p.44). Dr. Mepham is more forthright, for he says of the silver games in 1547: 'This is the first year the items for this festival [i.e. Corpus Christi] are given in detail. A play was evidently performed first - then games' (Mepham, 'Dunmow', p.136). However, all the accounts which detail Corpus Christi celebrations make no mention of the games which occurred in 1547, while there is no mention of Corpus Christi day in Great Dunmow's churchwardens' accounts after 1543.

70. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.30v., 34r., 35r., 38r. & 39v.
71. Eng.Hist.Docs.. v, no.115; Hutton, 'Local Impact', pp.116-17.
72. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fos.29r. & 30v.; Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.117.
73. Tudor Procs.. i, no.203.
74. Hutton, 'Local Impact', pp.123-4.
75. Emmison, Disorder. p.225.
76. Haigh, 'Ch., Caths. & People', p.215.
77. Morant, Essex. ii, pp.429-30.
78. Mepham, 'Maldon', p.40.
79. ERO T/A 242 fos.25-6.
80. Eng.Hist.Docs.. v, no.115; Hutton, 'Local Impact', pp.117-18.
81. Wickham, Med. Theatre. p.204; James, 'Ritual, Drama & Soc. Body', pp.21-9.

82. Brigden, London, p.344.

83. Tudor Procs., i, no.240.

84. Tudor Procs., i, no.344.

85. Tudor Procs., i, no.371.

86. King, 'Ch. Inventories', T.E.A.S., O.S. 5 (1873), p.120.

87. ERO T/A 105 fo.40r.. The men were presumably at sea.

88. A.P.C., v, p.234.

89. A.P.C., v, p.237.

90. P. Collinson, The Birthpangs of Protestant England (Basingstoke, 1988) [hereafter Collinson, Birthpangs]. p.102.

91. ibid., p.103.

92. PRO SP.1 130 fos.151-2; Collinson, Birthpangs, pp.106-12.

93. A.P.C., vi, p.119.

94. ERO T/A 105 fo.76r.

95. Tudor Procs., ii, no.458.

96. ERO T/A 242 fo.26.

97. ERO D/B 3/3/250.

98. Mepham, 'Maldon', pp.35-6.

99. Collinson, Birthpangs, pp.102-6.

100. Mepham, 'Maldon', pp.36 & 41.

101. ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.27v.

102. ERO D/p 94/5/1 fos.22-5. The Chelmsford plays are

recorded in a set of churchwardens' accounts dated 27 February 1562 to 20 March 1563. At this time 25 March was officially the start of the new year, thus these accounts actually run from February 1563 to March 1564, and the plays occurred in 1563; this is confirmed by the accounts also stating that March 1563 was in the sixth year of Elizabeth's reign. Both Dr. Mepham and Dr. Coldewey wrongly assumed that the Chelmsford plays occurred in 1562 (W.A. Mepham, 'The Chelmsford Plays of the Sixteenth Century', Essex Review 56 (1947) [hereafter Mepham, 'Chelmsford'], p.149; Coldewey, 'Early Essex Drama', pp.75f.).

103. Mepham, 'Chelmsford', pp.174-8.

104. Coldewey, 'Early Essex Drama', Chapter Five.

105. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.22r. & 23r.

106. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.23v. & 24-5.

107. Wickham, Med. Theatre, p.83.

108. Mepham, 'Heybridge & Braintree', pp.16-18; Mepham, 'Maldon', p.35.

109. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.22v. & 23v.

110. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.22-3.

111. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.14-15 & 20; Coldewey, 'Early Essex Drama', p.109.

112. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.22-3.

113. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.23-4.

114. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fo.24v.

115. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.24-5.

116. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.24-5.

117. Nelson, 'Configurations of Staging', pp.133-47.

118. Coldewey, 'Early Essex Drama', pp.207-13.

119. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fo.44v.

120. Collinson, Birthpangs, p.112; James, 'Ritual, Drama & Soc. Body', pp.28-9.

121. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fo.42v.

122. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fo.26.

123. ERO D/P 94/5/1 fos.34-42.

124. Wickham, Med. Theatre, pp.180-5.

125. ibid., p.206; Collinson, Birthpangs, pp.102-6.

126. Wickham, Med. Theatre, pp.186-7.

127. ibid., p.116.

128. ibid., pp.189-96.

129. Collinson, Birthpangs, p.102.

130. ibid., pp.112-13.

131. Collinson, Grindal, p.165; Wickham, Med. Theatre, p.202.

132. Collinson, Birthpangs, p.101; Collinson, Grindal, p.203.

133. Collinson, Grindal, p.165.

134. ERO D/AEA 3 fo.143v.

135. ERO D/AEA 3 fo.71r.

136. P. Burke, 'Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century

London', Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England. ed. B. Reay (London, 1985), p.39.

137. James, 'Ritual, Drama & Soc. Body', p.29.

CONCLUSION

1. Hutton, 'Local Impact', pp.123-4.
2. I. Luxton, 'The Reformation and Popular Culture', Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I, eds. F. Heal & R. O'Day (London, 1977), p.77.
3. Hutton, 'Local Impact', p.137; Oxley, Ref. in Essex. p.261.
4. See Appendix 1.
5. Dickens, Lollards & Prots.. pp.171-2; M.L.Zell, 'The Use of Religious Preambles as a Measure of Religious Belief in the Sixteenth Century', B.I.H.R. 50 (1977) [hereafter Zell, 'Use of Relig. Preambles'], pp.246-9.
6. Dickens, Lollards & Prots.. pp.171-2, 215-7 & 220-1.
7. P. Clark, English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent 1500-1640 (Hassocks, 1977), pp.58 & 76.
8. G.J. Mayhew, 'The Progress of the Reformation in East Sussex: The Evidence from Wills', Southern History 5 (1983) [hereafter Mayhew, 'Ref. in E.

Sussex'], p.46.

9. Whiting, Blind Devotion, Appendix 2.
10. Scarisbrick, Ref. & People, pp.3 & 5.
11. Whiting, Blind Devotion, Appendix 2; Mayhew, 'Ref. in E. Sussex', pp.52-5; Zell, 'Use of Relig. Preambles', p.247; Haigh, Ref. & Resistance, Chapter 5; M. Bowker, The Henrician Reformation: The Diocese of Lincoln under John Longland, 1521-1547 (Cambridge, 1981), p.177.
12. Dickens, 'Early Expansion', passim.
13. ibid., pp.197-200; Haigh, 'Recent Historiography', p.24.
14. Whiting, Blind Devotion, p.146; Mayhew, 'Ref. in E. Sussex', p.50.
15. Whiting, Blind Devotion, p.268.
16. Haigh, Eng. Ref. Revised, pp.6-7 & 15-16; Scarisbrick, Ref. & People, p.61.
17. Haigh, Eng. Ref. Revised, p.14.
18. ibid., pp.2-6; Oxley, Ref. in Essex, p.16.
19. Haigh, Eng. Ref. Revised, pp.6-9.

APPENDIX ONE

ANALYSIS OF WILLS, 1500-1570

A - 1500-10 (57 wills)
B - 1511-20 (66 wills)
C - 1521-30 (99 wills)
D - 1531-35 (73 wills)
E - 1536-40 (90 wills)
F - 1541-43 (111 wills)
G - 1544-46 (84 wills)
H - 1547-49 (95 wills)
I - 1550-June 1553 (182 wills)
J - July 1553-1555 (140 wills)
K - 1556-58 (218 wills)
L - 1559-61 (260 wills)
M - 1562-65 (241 wills)
N - 1566-70 (267 wills)

TOTAL - 1,983 wills

1] BEQUEST OF THE SOUL

SOUL TO GOD, ST MARY & ALL THE SAINTS:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
84	91	88	82	71	73	60	21	11	22	35	5	0	0

SOUL TO GOD:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
4	3	7	5	17	14	25	45	53	43	38	58	58	49

SOUL TO THE TRINITY:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	6	½	1	1	4

SOUL THROUGH MERITS/PASSION, &c., OF JESUS CHRIST:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
0	0	0	1	2	5	10	13	13	9	7	17	26	35

SOUL TO OTHER DEDCATION:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
4	2	4	7	7	6	2	18	17	18	19	16	15	10

NO BEQUEST OF SOUL:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
9	3	1	1	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	1	½	½

2] BEQUEST OF BODY, OTHER THAN BURIAL IN THE LOCAL PARISH CHURCHYARD

BURIAL IN CHURCH:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
7	20	15	11	3	7	10	7	4	3	4	3	3	5

BURIAL SPECIFIED IN CHURCH YARD:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
0	12	7	3	7	13	8	3	2	4	4	2	2	3

BURIED 'WHERE IT PLEASES GOD', ETC.:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
5	2	2	1	4	3	11	16	20	17	15	23	26	24

BURIED IN ANOTHER PARISH:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
11	3	3	1	1	3	6	4	0	1	0	½	1	1

NO MENTION OF BURIAL:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
4	0	0	3	1	1	0	3	2	5	2	3	12	9

BODY BROUGHT HONESTLY TO EARTH:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
4	8	8	15	23	21	18	9	11	20	13	15	9	12

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR BURIAL:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
4	14	9	10	12	15	11	11	10	10	16	5	8	3

ARRANGEMENTS FOR MONTH/YEAR MIND:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
2	15	4	11	12	16	11	5	2	1	5	1	0	0

3] BEQUESTS OF A RELIGIOUS NATURE

TO THE HIGH ALTAR OR TO A CLERIC, FOR FORGOTTEN TITHES:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
56	85	76	71	57	56	38	15	4	5	12	3	1	1

TO HIGH ALTAR, NO MENTION OF TITHES:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
28	5	12	7	7	14	14	5	0	0	3	½	0	0

TO LIGHT/ALTAR:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
21	18	21	14	17	11	6	1	0	0	1	0	0	0

TO PARISH CHURCH:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
42	50	37	15	20	20	17	4	4	9	15	3	7½	6

TO ANOTHER PARISH CHURCH:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
16	20	17	11	8	3	5	2	0	0	½	½	0	0

TO ST. PAUL'S:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
32	38	28	12	4	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0

TO A RELIGIOUS HOUSE:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
14	9	17	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	½	0	0	0

TO GUILDS:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
5	9	5	4	1	5	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

FOR A CHANTRY OR STIPENDIARY PRIEST:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
14	14	11	3	2	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

FOR A TRENTAL:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
23	26	30	15	9	8	4	1	0	0	0	0	0	0

FOR AN OBIT:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
26	21	25	14	10	13	4	0	0	0	½	0	0	0

RESIDUE DISPOSED OF FOR SOUL'S HEALTH:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
40	36	29	27	21	16	17	4	3	4	4	½	0	0

OTHER RELIGIOUS ARRANGEMENTS:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
12	20	12	5	3	4	5	5	3	1	1	0	1	1

RELIGIOUS ARRANGEMENTS IF LINE FAILS:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
16	12	11	10	6	7	5	8	1	6	4	2	2	3

ONE OR MORE FORMS OF INTERCESSION SPECIFIED:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
70	76	70	60	49	52	42	16	7	12	15	1	0	0

4] CHARITY

CHARITY - TO THE POOR (* = POOR BOX):

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
12	11	4	7	13	15	11	29	44	29	28	32	40	33
* 0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	17	4	1	12	13	13

CHARITY - TO HIGHWAYS, ETC.:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
5	6	9	3	8	14	6	7	7	4	4	1	1	2

5] MISCELLANEOUS

EXECUTORS TO ANSWER TO GOD:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
0	5	3	0	2	4	0	1	1	1	2	1	1	½

NO RELIGIOUS BEQUESTS:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
0	1	0	3	1	0	1	1	2	1	1	1	½	2

NO RELIGIOUS BEQUEST APART FROM REPOSE OF SOUL/BODY:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
4	0	2	10	13	20	27	49	49	56	53	63	58	62

PROFESSION OF TESTATOR:

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
7	11	7	15	11	19	21	25	28	36	32	28	32	31

TESTATOR A WOMAN (* = WIDOW):

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N
15	11	18	15	16	13	10	16	17	12	13	19	12	15
*12	9	12	8	9	7	6	11	13	10	9	12	7	10

APPENDIX TWO

RELIGIOUS GUILDS OF ESSEX

NOTE: entries marked * are mentioned only in documents from before 1485. It is possible that entries for some parishes have been doubled up, such as when one source names a guild, while another mentions only guild property without stating the guild to which it belongs, e.g. Ashdon.

ARKESDEN

St Margaret - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59.
St John the Baptist - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59.
St Katherine - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59.

ASHDON

guild - C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, p.408; Eliz.I, v, p.41.
Our Lady - PRO E.301/19 no.46; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; Morant, Essex., ii, p.542.
guild stock - BL Stowe MS.827 fo.29r.

AVELEY

'to ether of the bretherheds lyght' - ERO D/AEW 1/307.

GT. BARDFIELD	'Yeldehall' - BL Stowe MS.827 fo.28r.; T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; C.P.R.. Edw.VI, ii, p.366.
BARKING	Trinity - ERO D/AEW 2/125. The Virgin - C.M. Barron, 'The Parish Fraternities of Medieval London', p.30.
BELCHAMP OTTON	guild which celebrated on 1 Nov. - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; Morant, Essex. ii, p.334.
BELCHAMP WALTER	'the guilde hall' - PRO E.301/19 no.165; T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; C.P.R.. Eliz.I, ii, p.258.
BIRDBROOK	guild - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; C.P.R.. Edw.VI, iii, p.29.
BRADFIELD	guild - C.P.R.. Eliz.I, viii, p.223.
BRAINTREE	Jesus - ERO T/A 242 fo.25r.; D/ABW 18/39; PRO PCC Fetiplace fo.37v. & Ayloffe fo.147v.; T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; Morant, Essex. ii, p.400.

St John the Baptist - ERO T/A f.25v.; D/ABW 18/39; PRO PCC Fetiplace fo.37v.; T.E.A.S. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; Morant, Essex, ii, p.400.

Crispin & Crispina - T.E.A.S. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; Morant, Essex, ii, p.400.

Plow - ERO T/A 242 f.25r.; T.E.A.S. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; Morant, Essex, ii, p.400.

Torch - T.E.A.S. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; Morant, Essex, ii, p.400.

guild of Our Lady's Lights - ERO T/A 242 f.25v.; T.E.A.S. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; Morant, Essex, ii, p.400.

GT. BROMLEY — guild - T.E.A.S. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I, iii, p.66.

HELION BUMPSTEAD — St Peter - Morant, Essex, ii, p.533.

STEEPLE BUMPSTEAD — 'Seynt Margarettes Guylde' - T.E.A.S. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; C.P.R. Edw.VI, ii, p.408.

'Yeldehall' of 'Seynt Peters Guilde' - T.E.A.S. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; C.P.R. Edw.VI, iii, p.29.

'the guilde hall' - C.P.R. Eliz.I, ii, p.258.
guild - Morant, Essex. ii, p.355.

BURNHAM — St Mary's - T.E.A.S. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.
St Peter's - ERO D/AEW 1/270; T.E.A.S. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.

GT. BURSTEAD — guild - C.P.R. Eliz.I, vi, p.324.

CANEWDON — St Catherine's - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R. Eliz.I, v, p.39.
St Margaret's - T.E.A.S. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.

CHELMSFORD — 'Our Ladye Guylde' - PRO E.301/19 no.36; E.301/20 no.55; T.E.A.S. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; C.P.R. Edw.VI, ii, p.229; Morant, Essex. ii, p.7.
'Corpus Christi Guylde', otherwise 'Or Morowe masse' - PRO E.301/19 no.36; E.301/20 no.55; T.E.A.S. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; C.P.R. Edw.VI, iii, p.219; Morant, Essex. ii, p.7.
St John's - PRO E.301/19 no.36;

T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; Morant, Essex, ii, p.7.
Holy Trinity* - T.E.A.S. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.282.

GT. CHESTERFORD — chantry or guild - C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, p.388.
Corpus Christi - T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.

CHIGWELL — Holy Trinity - ERO D/AEW 2/18; PRO E.301/19 no.47; V.C.H., Essex, iv, p.33; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; C.P.R., Edw.VI, i, p.287.

OVER CHISHALL — guild - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.40.

LT. CLACTON — 'guildehouse' - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3). p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I. v. p.348.

CLAVERING — 'the guilde hall' in the churchyard, & a roofless chapel called Our Ladye Chapple, given to the guild to sing 'le morrowe masse' in the chapel - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307;

C.P.R.. Eliz.I, v, pp.40-1.
St John the Baptist - ERO D/ACR 1 fos.43r., 195v. & 224r.; D/ACR 2 fo.150r.
St Katherine - D/ACR 1 fos.111r. & 224r.; D/ACR 2 fo.150r.

COGGESHALL — 'le Yeldehall' - PRO E.301/19 no.189; C.P.R.. Edw.VI, ii, p.408.
Corpus Christi - ERO D/ACA 1 fo.45r..

COLCHESTER — 'Saint Annes guilde' - L.& P., x, g.1015 (29); C.P.R.. Eliz.I, ii, p.159.
St Helen's - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; L.& P.. xiv pt.ii, g.619 (31); P. Morant, The History and Antiquities of the most ancient Town and Borough of Colchester in the County of Essex (London,1748), p.153.

CROSSED FRIARS — fraternity of either sex instituted in the church of the Crossed Friars - L.& P., i, no.3568.

GREY FRIARS — Our Lady - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.58r.

ST JAMES'S	St Anne - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.58r.
ST NICHOLAS'S	St Nicholas - ERO D/ACR 1 fo.200r.; D/ACR 3 fo.1r. Trinity - ERO D/ACR 1 fo.200r.
ST PETER'S	St John or Jesus Masse - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; P. Morant, The History & Antiquities of the most ancient Town & Borough of Colchester in the County of Essex (London, 1748), p.159. St Barbara - ERO D/ACR 1 fo.200r.
TRINITY	Trinity - ERO D/ACA 2 fo.24v..
COLNE ENGAINE	guild - C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.228.
WAKES COLNE	guild - ERO D/ACA 1 fo.136r.
DAGENHAM	Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/360; D/AEW 2/22; D/AEW 2/36; D/AEW 2/151. St John - ERO D/AEW 1/360. St Anne - ERO D/AEW 1/360. St Christopher - ERO D/AEW 1/360.

DANBURY	guild(s) - C.P.R., Edw.VI, iii, p.86; Edw.VI, v, p.226; Eliz.I, v, p.342. guild of St John the Baptist & the Assumption of St Mary - L.& P., i, no.438.
DEBDEN	'le Guildehall' of 'Saynt Thomas Guilde' - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; C.P.R., Edw.VI, iii, p.29. 'a guilde howse' - C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.40.
DEDHAM	St Nicholas - L.& P., iv, no.6121.
DOVERCOURT	guild (of St George) - PRO E.301/19 no.182; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; Morant, Essex, i, p.498.
GT. DUNMOW	St Saviour - ERO D/P 11/5/1 fo.26r.; T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307. St John - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307.
HIGH EASTER	'Our Ladyes guyldhall'- T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.228.

EASTHORPE	guild - ERO D/ACA 1 fo.130v.. Our Lady - ERO D/ACA 1 fo.136.
GT. EASTON	St Peter's - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3). p.307: C.P.R.. Eliz.I. v. p.228.
ELMDON	'Yeldehall' of the guild - C.P.R.. Edw.VI, ii, p.366.
ELSENHAM	'the guylde hall' - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3). p.307: C.P.R.. Eliz.I. v. p.40.
FARNHAM	'the guylde hall' - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3). p.307: C.P.R.. Eliz.I. v. p.40.
FEERING	'Gilde Howse' of 'Corpus Christi Gilde' - PRO E.301/19 no.199; T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; C.P.R.. Edw.VI, i, p.341.
FINCHINGFIELD	guild - C.P.R.. Edw.VI, i, p.295. 'the guildehall' - C.P.R.. Eliz.I, ii, p.258. Trinity - PRO E.301/19 no.13; E.301/20

no.19; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; Morant, Essex, ii, p.370.

FORDHAM — St Mary - ERO D/ACA 1 fo.59v..

FYFIELD — guild - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I. v. p.348.

GESTINGTHORPE — 'the guildehall or towne howse' - C.P.R., Eliz.I, ii, p.258.

GT. HALLINGBURY — St Catherine's - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.39.
Trinity - ERO D/P 27/5 passim.; V.C.H., Essex, viii, p.123.

HALSTEAD — 'Yeldehall' - C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, p.366.

EAST HAM — Holy Trinity - T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290; V.C.H., Essex, vi, p.26.
St Mary - T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290; V.C.H., Essex, vi, p.26.

HARWICH — guilds - C.P.R.. Eliz.I, iv, p.227.
St George's - C.P.R.. Eliz.I, v, pp.274, 342 & 348.

HATFIELD BROAD OAK — 'the Guilde Howse' - C.P.R.. Eliz.I, iv, p.353; Morant, Essex. ii, p.510.
'the oulde guildhall' of Jesus - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; C.P.R.. Eliz.I, v, p.348.
St John the Baptist - T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290; C.P.R.. Eliz.I, v, p.348.
guild (St Mary)* - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.283; V.C.H.. Essex. viii, p.181.

HEMPSTEAD — 'le Yeldhall' of All Saints - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; C.P.R.. Edw.VI, iii, p.29.
'the guildhall' - C.P.R.. Eliz.I, ii, p.258.
St Thomas's -T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R.. Eliz.I, iv, p.353; Eliz.I, v, p.40.

HENHAM — guild of Corpus Christi, Trinity & St Mary - C.P.R.. Eliz.I, vi, p.412.

GT. HENNY — St John the Baptist - T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.

HEYDON — 'le guilde hall' - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.40.
[In T.E.A.S., N.S. 11 (1909-10), p.206, there is recorded M' Gilde - my reading of the original source in the British Library (Stowe MS.827 fo.19r.), however, is Mr. Gilde.]

HORNCHURCH — Jesus - ERO D/AEW 1/279; D/AEW 2/59; D/AEW 2/84; C.P.R., Edw.VI, iii, p.262; V.C.H., Essex, vii, p.47.
Trinity - ERO D/AEW 1/279; PRO E.301/19 no.19; E.301/20 no.21; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; V.C.H., Essex, vii, p.47.
Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/279; V.C.H., Essex, vii, p.47; Morant, Essex, i, p.75.
St Peter* - V.C.H., Essex, vii, p.47.

INGATESTONE — Jesus - ERO D/AEW 1/324.

KIRBY-LE-SOKEN — 'a guildhall' of Holy Trinity - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R.. Eliz.I, v, p.348.

LITTLEBURY — St Peter's - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.

MALDON — the Assumption* - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.283.
Holy Trinity* - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.285.

ST MARY'S — St George - PRO E.301/19 no.31; E.301/20 no.49; PCC Porch fo.189v.; T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; C.P.R.. Edw.VI, i, p.399; Eliz.I, vii, p.311; Morant. Essex. i. p.334.

ALL SAINTS — St Katherine - ERO D/AEW 1/426; PRO E.301/19 no.31; E.301/20 no.49; PCC Porch fo.189v.: T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12). p.289: C.P.R.. Edw.VI, i, p.399; Morant. Essex. i. p.333.

ST PETER'S — St Mary - PRO E.301/20 no.49; PCC Porch fo.189v.: T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12). p.289: C.P.R.. Edw.VI, i,

p.399; Eliz.I, vii, p.311; Morant, Essex, i, pp.333-4.

MANNINGTREE — guild - C.P.R., Edw.VI, iii, p.404. Holy Trinity* - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; Morant, Essex, i, p.463.

MANUDEN — guild of Holy Cross & St Catherine - C.P.R., Eliz.I, vi, p.412.

MATCHING — guild - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.40.

EAST MERSEA — Holy Trinity - C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.274.

MORETON — All Saints - T.E.A.S., N.S. 11 (1911), pp.223-29; V.C.H., Essex, iv, p.136-7.

NEWPORT — 'le Corpus Christi Yeldehall' - C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, p.366.

WHITE NOTLEY — 'the guildehall' of St John's - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.40.

PRITTLEWELL	guild - C.P.R.. Edw.VI, i, p.277. 'Jesus Howse' or Jesus guild - PRO E.301/19 no.1; C.1 935/13-14; C.1 960/50-3; T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; L.& P.. i, no. 438; C.P.R.. Eliz.I, i, p.88; Morant, Essex. i, p.297.
RADWINTER	'the guylde hall' - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R.. Eliz.I, v, p.40.
RAYLEIGH	Holy Trinity* - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.287. St John the Baptist* - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.
RAWRETH	St Mary's - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.
RIDGEWELL	'le Yeldehall' of the 'Jhesus Guylde' - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; C.P.R.. Edw.VI, ii, p.408.
AYTHORPE RODING	guild - T.E.A.S.. N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R.. Eliz.I, v, p.39.

HIGH RODING	'the guilde hall' - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.40.
ROMFORD	St Mary - PRO E.301/19 no.21; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289; C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, pp.48 & 312; V.C.H., Essex, vii, p.83.
SAFFRON WALDEN	Holy Trinity - ERO T/A 401/2; PRO E.301/20 no.31; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), pp.288, 290; L.& P., i, no.2772, iii, no.2993 & xvii, no.443 (36); C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, p.211. late guild of Gt. Walden - C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, pp.387-8. 'Our Lady of Petyt Guylde' - T.E.A.S., N.S. 15 (1918-20), p.98; C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, pp.387-8. All Saints* - T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.287. Corpus Christi* - T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.288.
ST OSYTH'S	'trinite gylde' - T.E.A.S., N.S. 1 (1878), p.28.

SHALFORD	'the guylde hall' - C.P.R., Eliz.I. ii, p.258. 'a guilde hall' - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I. v. p.41.
SPRINGFIELD	St Katherine - T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.
STANBOURNE	St Thomas - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.59; Morant, Essex, ii, p.358.
STANFORD LE HOPE	guild - T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.
STEBBING	'the guildehall' - C.P.R., Eliz.I. ii. p.258.
STISTED	St Mary* - T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290; Morant, Essex, ii, p.394.
TAKELEY	'le Yeldehall' of the guild - C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, p.381. Our Lady - PRO E.301/19 no.129; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.

TERLING	Trinity - Poverty & Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525-1700. K. Wrightson & D. Levine London, 1979), p.154.
THAXTED	'Roode Gilde' - C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, p.50. chantry or guild - C.P.R., Eliz.I, i, p.408. guild - T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.289. St John - PRO E.301/20 no.18; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290.
TOLLESBURY	guild - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I, iii, p.67.
UGLEY	guild - C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.40.
ULTING	guild - C.P.R., Edw.VI, iv, p.116; Eliz.I, i, pp.314 & 458, ii, p.258. St Mary's - PRO E.301/19 no.28; E.301/20 no.30; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), pp.289, 290; C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.39; Morant, Essex, ii, p.137.

UPMINSTER	Trinity - T.E.A.S., N.S. 2 (1884); V.C.H., Essex, vii, p.157.
GT. WALTHAM	'the churche howse alias the gilde hall' of Holy Trinity - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.40; Morant, Essex, ii, p.89.
WALTHAM HOLY CROSS	Charnel - ERO D/AEW 2/145; D/AEW 2/156; D/AEW 2/176; PRO E.301/19 no.45; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290; C.P.R., Edw.VI, i, pp.345-6; V.C.H., Essex, v, p.171; Morant, Essex, i, p.45. chantry or guild of St Mary - ERO D/AEW 2/145; D/AEW 2/156; D/AEW 2/176; PRO E.301/19 no.45; T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), p.290; C.P.R., Edw.VI, ii, pp.231 & 280; V.C.H., Essex, v, p.171; Morant, Essex, i, p.45. guild - C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.342.
SOUTH WEALD	Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/331.
GT. WENDEN	'le guilde hall' - T.E.A.S., N.S. 16 (1921-3), p.307; C.P.R., Eliz.I, v, p.41.

WIMBISH	Holy Trinity - T.E.A.S., N.S. 15 (1918-20), p.98.
WIVENHOE	guild - T.E.A.S., N.S. 3 (1885-9), p.56.
WRITTLE	St John the Baptist - C.P.R., Edw.VI, iii, p.95. guild - PRO C.1 759/50-1.

APPENDIX 3

LIGHTS IN ESSEX CHURCHES

It has been suggested that a number of those lights which were the subject of bequests in wills of the period prior to 1547 were in fact maintained by guilds (J.J. Scarisbrick, The Reformation and the English People, pp.26-8). In the light of this, there follows a list of all those lights and altars to which money was left by those wills looked at. Lights marked with a * correspond to guilds of the same name as found in Appendix 1; parishes marked with a # either contained an unnamed guild, or a guild(s) with a dedication other than the alter/light named below.

ALRESFORD	Our Lady - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.113v..
	'bachelers light' before Our Lady - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.114r..
GT. BARDFIELD#	Trinity - ERO D/ACR 1 fo.73r..
	St John the Baptist - ERO D/ACR 1 fo.73r..
BARKING	St Christopher - ERO D/AEW 1/255, D/AEW 1/299, D/AEW 1/340, D/AEW 1/400, D/AEW 1/429, D/AEW 1/444.
	Our Lady* - ERO D/AEW 1/299, D/AEW

1/308, D/AEW 1/308, D/AEW 1/340, D/AEW 1/400, D/AEW 1/402, D/AEW 1/429, D/AEW 1/431, D/AEW 1/433, D/AEW 1/439, D/AEW 1/444.

Trinity* - ERO D/AEW 1/299, D/AEW 1/340, D/AEW 1/400, D/AEW 1/433, D/AEW 1/439, D/AEW 2/63.

St Margaret - ERO D/AEW 1/299, D/AEW 1/340, D/AEW 1/429, D/AEW 1/439.

St Peter - ERO D/AEW 1/299, D/AEW 1/308, D/AEW 1/340, D/AEW 1/400, D/AEW 1/402, D/AEW 1/444.

St John the Baptist - ERO D/AEW 1/299, D/AEW 1/340.

St 'Kyrst' - ERO D/AEW 1/308.

St James - ERO D/AEW 1/308, D/AEW 1/400, D/AEW 1/429, D/AEW 1/444.

St Anthony - ERO D/AEW 1/340.

St George - ERO D/AEW 1/344, D/AEW 1/433.

St Katherine - ERO D/AEW 1/439.

BRAINTREE — St Katherine - PRO PCC Ayloffe fo.147v.

BROOMFIELD — St Margaret - ERO D/AER 2 f.32v..

St Leonard - ERO D/AER 2 fos.33v. &

58r..

'Or Lady of pety' - ERO D/AER 2 fo.33v..

CHELMSFORD — Our Lady* - ERO D/AEW 1/350.

CHIGWELL# — Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/301.

St Thomas - ERO D/AEW 1/409.

COLCHESTER:

ST NICHOLAS# — Our Lady - ERO D/ACR 1 fo.19r..

St Anthony - ERO D/ACR 1 fo.19r..

CORRINGHAM — Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/303.

DAGENHAM — 'comyn' light - ERO D/AEW 1/342, D/AEW 1/368, D/AEW 2/13, D/AEW 2/36, D/AEW 2/151.

Our Lady* - ERO D/AEW 1/342, D/AEW 1/368, D/AEW 1/423.

St John* - ERO D/AEW 1/342, D/AEW 1/368.

St Anne* - ERO D/AEW 1/342 (?), D/AEW 1/368.

St Christopher* - ERO D/AEW 1/342, D/AEW 1/368.

St James - ERO D/AEW 1/423.

DOWNHAM	Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/315.
FORDHAM#	Trinity - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.3r..
EAST HAM	St Mary Magdelene - ERO D/AEW 1/261.
	Our Lady* - ERO D/AEW 1/261.
	St Peter - ERO D/AEW 1/261.
	St Thomas - ERO D/AEW 1/261.
	St John - ERO D/AEW 1/261.
WEST HAM	Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/263.
HARWICH	St Nicholas - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.27v..
	St George* - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.27v.; PRO PCC Holder fos.138v. & 161r..
	Our Lady Light - PRO PCC Holder fos.138v. & 161r.
HOCKLEY	St Margaret - ERO D/AEW 1/326.
	Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/326.
	Trinity - ERO D/AEW 1/327.
GT. HOLLAND	St Nicholas - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.58v..
	All Saints - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.125r..
	Our Lady - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.125r..

HORNCHURCH	Jesus* - ERO D/AEW 1/358, D/AEW 1/375, D/AEW 1/388, D/AEW 1/396, D/AEW 1/417, D/AEW 2/14, D/AEW 2/21, D/AEW 2/23, D/AEW 2/53, D/AEW 2/64, D/AEW 2/136, D/AEW 2/195.
	Trinity* - ERO D/AEW 1/358, D/AEW 1/375, D/AEW 1/388, D/AEW 1/417, D/AEW 2/14, D/AEW 2/21, D/AEW 2/23, D/AEW 2/53, D/AEW 2/59, D/AEW 2/64, D/AEW 2/84, D/AEW 2/136.
	Our Lady* - ERO D/AEW 1/358, D/AEW 1/375, D/AEW 1/388, D/AEW 1/396, D/AEW 1/417, D/AEW 2/21, D/AEW 2/64, D/AEW 2/84, D/AEW 2/136.
INGATESTONE#	Trinity - ERO D/AEW 1/356.
INGRAVE	Tourch light - ERO D/AEW 2/91.
BLACK NOTLEY	Our Lady - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.153r..
CHIPPING ONGAR	St Nicholas - ERO D/AEW 1/284.
RAMSDEN BELLHOUSE	Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/271.
RAYLEIGH#	Trinity* - ERO D/AEW 1/293.
	Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/293.

	St 'Unconr' (Uncumber alias Wilgefortis?) - ERO D/AEW 1/293.
GT. STANWAY	Our Lady - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.3r..
LT. STANWAY	St Ethelbert - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.3r.. Our Lady - ERO D/ACR 2 fos.3r. & 194v.. St Anthony - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.3r.. St Erasmus - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.3r.. 'bachellers & maydens light' - ERO D/ACR 2 fo.3r..
WALTHAM HOLY CROSS	Our Lady* - ERO D/AEW 2/169. 'Charnell'* - ERO D/AEW 2/169.
WALTHAMSTOW	Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/276. St Katherine - ERO D/AEW 1/276. 'hoke' light - ERO D/AEW 1/276. 'plowe' light - ERO D/AEW 1/276.
WANSTEAD	St Christopher - ERO D/AEW 1/320. Rood - ERO D/AEW 1/320.
WOODFORD	Our Lady - ERO D/AEW 1/274.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1] PRIMARY SOURCES

ESSEX RECORD OFFICE

1) Churchwardens' Accounts:

D/P 29/5	Boreham Churchwardens' Accounts, 1565-1736.
T/A 242	Braintree Churchwardens' Accounts, 1522-1579, transcribed by Samuel Dale (1680-1730).
D/P 248/5/1	Broomfield Churchwardens' Accounts, 1540-1610.
D/P 94/5/1	Chelmsford Churchwardens' Accounts, 1557-1668.
D/P 11/5/1	Great Dunmow Churchwardens' Accounts, 1526-1621.
D/P 27/5/1	Great Hallingbury Churchwardens' Accounts, 1526-1630.
T/A 105	Harwich Churchwardens' Accounts, 1550-1619.
D/P 44/5	Heybridge Churchwardens' Accounts, 1532-1564.
D/P 192/5/2	Saffron Walden Churchwardens' Accounts, 1439-1490, transcribed and translated by Mrs. H. Habditch,

c.1948.

D/P 277/5/1 — Wivenhoe Churchwardens' Accounts, 1562-1649.

ii) Other Parish/Borough Records:

D/B 1/2 — Great Dunmow Borough Records: Minutes, 1571-1725.

D/P 71/28/1 — Dunton: Memorabilia. historical notes on the parish from c.1292 (2 vols.).

D/P 77/7/1 — West Mersea: Obligations to maintain obits and lamps, c.1530.

T/A 401/2 — Accounts of Holy Trinity Guild, Saffron Walden, 1545-1651.

D/B 3/3/236 — Maldon Borough Records: Chamberlains' Accounts, 1540.

D/B 3/3/250 — Maldon Borough Records: Chamberlains' Roll, 1562.

D/DM T28/2A — Grant of Chantry Lands in Broomfield, 1548.

D/DA T25 — Grant of Rectory of Braintree, 1546.

iii) Church Records:

a) Court & Miscellaneous:

D/ACA 1 — Acts, Archdeaconry of Colchester, 1540-42; inc. Visitations.

D/ACA 2	Acts, Archdeaconry of Colchester, 1542-45; inc. Visitations.
D/ACA 3	Acts, Archdeaconry of Colchester, 1569-70.
D/AEA 1	Acts, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1560.
D/AEA 1A	Acts, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1561-62.
D/AEA 2	Acts, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1563-65.
D/AEA 3	Acts, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1565-66.
D/AEA 4	Acts, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1567-68.
D/AEA 5	Acts, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1569-70.
D/AEV 1	Visitation, Archdeaconry of Essex, June 1565; inc. Acts, 1565.
D/ABR 4	Acts, Bishop of London, Commissary in Essex & Herts., 1561-62.
D/AEM 4	Induction Book, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1563-1646.

b) Probate:

D/AEW 1	Wills, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1400-1538.
D/AEW 2	Wills, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1539-53.
D/AEW 3	Wills, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1554-59.
D/AEW 4	Wills, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1560-65.
D/AEW 5	Wills, Archdeaconry of Essex, 1566-69.

Using Wills at Chelmsford, Volume 1 (1400-1619). ed. F.G. Emmison, the following records have been used to look up wills for the parishes of: Broomfield, Braintree, Great Dunmow, Great Hallingbury, Harwich & Heybridge, together with 19 parishes selected at random from the area under the jurisdiction of the Archdeacon of Colchester:

Registers from the Archdeaconry of Colchester:

D/ACR 1 1500-14.
D/ACR 2 1514-35.
D/ACR 3 1533-38, 1543-47, 1558-64.
D/ACR 4 1537-44.
D/ACR 5 1558-66.
D/ACR 6 1566-76.

Registers from the Archdeaconry of Essex:

D/AER 1 1420-35, 1478-92, 1500.
D/AER 2 1501-05.
D/AER 3 1517-24.
D/AER 4 1528-35.
D/AER 5 1531, 1533, 1540-57.
D/AER 6 1535-40, 1544.
D/AER 7 1549-52.
D/AER 8 1557-61, 1562, 1569.
D/AER 10 1558-62.
D/AER 11A 1568-70.

Registers from the Archdeaconry of Middlesex:

D/AMR 1 1554-63.

D/AMR 2 1557-63.

D/AMR 3 1563-82.

Registers from the Bishop of London's Commissary in Essex & Hertfordshire:

D/ABR 1 1553-58.

D/ABR 2 1559-63.

D/ABR 3 1564-66.

D/ABR 4 1565-70.

Wills from the following boxes:

D/ABW 1, 3, 4, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28, 31, 33, 34, 37, 38, 39.

iv) Other Records:

O/SR 1-33	Calendar of County Records: Quarter Session Records, 1556-71.
T/A 428	Calendar of Queen's Bench Indictments Ancient Relating to Essex, 1558-1603, in the P.R.O..

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE

i) Chantry Certificates:

E.301/19	Edwardian Chantry Certificates.
E.301/20	Henrician Chantry Certificates.

ii) Court of Star Chamber:

STAC.2 9 fo.159	Tithe dispute between the vicar of Lt. Wakering and the parson of Paglesham.
STAC.2 6 fo.125	Attack in Barking church.
STAC.2 18/139	Attack in Barking church.
STAC.2 20/26	Murder in Colchester sanctuary.
STAC.2 20/100	Murder in Colchester sanctuary.
STAC.2 23/35	Theft of church goods from Gt. Waltham.
STAC.2 24/428	Assault of vicar of Takeley at Hatfield Regis.
STAC.2 26/184	Assault of vicar of Takeley at Hatfield Regis.
STAC.2 26/246	Assault of vicar of Takeley at Hatfield Regis.
STAC.2 33/55	Attack in Barking church.

iii) State Papers:

SP.1 39 fo.49 — Colchester Crossed Friars: letter concerning sanctuary at this house, 1526.

SP.1 47 fo.85 — Walden: report of seditious preaching, 1528.

SP.1 68 fo.148 — Hornchurch: letter informing against Thomas Duke, vicar, 1531.

SP.1 76 fo.24 — Boxted: letter wishing king to repair church of which he is now patron, 1533.

SP.1 82 fo.152 — Colchester Abbey: letter informing that king and his council called heretics, 1534.

SP.1 83 fo.38 — Colchester: letter concerning preaching against books, 1534.

SP.1 89 fo.108 — Great Maplestead: letter concerning vicar in dispute over property, 1535.

SP.1 99 fo.199 — Harwich: articles against curate, 1535.

SP.1 100 fo.29 — Boxted: letter from brother of an accused heretic, 1535.

SP.1 100 fo.73 — Boxted: letter complaining of imprisonment by the bishop of London, 1535.

SP.1 104 fo.300 — Hornchurch: letter informing against

Thomas Duke, vicar, 1536.

SP.1 112 fo.244 Colchester: letter concerning support for Northern rebels, 1536.

SP.1 116 fo.7 Weeley: depositions concerning support for Northern rebels, 1537.

SP.1 124 fo.193 Aldham: depositions concerning words spoken against the king, 1537.

SP.1 130 fo.151 Braintree: depositions concerning disturbance at market, 1538.

SP.1 150 fo.203 Harwich: articles against Richard James, 1539.

SP.1 152 fo.79 Copford: complaint that pope's name remains in certain books, 1539.

SP.1 158 fo.105 Waltham Holy Cross: letter requesting the bells of the abbey to be given to the parish, 1540.

SP.1 158 fo.128 St Osith's: letter reporting seditious words, 1540.

SP.1 218 fo.139 Brentwood: report by Commission of Six Articles concerning proceedings against five people, 1546.

SP.1 239 fo.160 Braintree: letter by vicar to patron of benefice, before 1516.

SP.2 O (30) Maldon: depositions concerning words spoken against king by priest, 1533.

SP.2 R fo.21 Mistley: copy of sermon of friar Robert Ward, 1535.

SP.12 16 fo.115 Mass said at houses of Sir Thomas Wharton and Sir Edward Walgrave, 1561.

iv) Court of Chancery:

C.1 311/13-4 Lt. Horkesley: failure to provide intercession.

C.1 350/73 Colchester: cleric accused of assault.

C.1 351/9-11 Rawreth: failure to provide intercession.

C.1 364/66-70 Brentwood: failure to provide intercession when line failed.

C.1 460/54-5 Farnham: failure to provide intercession.

C.1 545/19-20a West Hanningfield: assault & robbery of cleric.

C.1 561/58 High Ongar: tithe dispute.

C.1 582/9 Tillingham: money due to church.

C.1 583/65 Hadleigh: expulsion of cleric from church during divine service.

C.1 624/10 Failure to provide intercession.

C.1 636/19-21 Coggeshall: failure to provide intercession.

C.1 690/24 Clochester: cleric accused of slander.

C.1 759/50-1 Writtle: dispute over guild property.

C.1 915/50 Walden(?): violation of sacrament.

C.1 935/13-14 Prittlewell: dispute over lease of

guild property.

C.1 960/50-3 Prittlewell: detention of guild papers.

C.1 1095/1 Chipping Ongar: disputed ownership of defunct church decor.

C.1 1097/1 Tendring: tithe dispute & withdrawal from sacraments.

C.1 1108/56-7 Boreham: conservative cleric vexing certain parishioners.

C.1 1407/52-4 Canewdon: failure to maintain intercession.

v) Probate:

Wills for the parishes of Braintree, Broomfield, Great Dunmow, Great Hallingbury, Harwich & Heybridge have been found in the following registers of the Perogative Court of Canterbury:

Holgrave, Moone, Blamyr, Fetiplace, Holder, Ayloffe, Bodfelde, Porch, Jankyn, Crumwell, Populwell, Powell, Stevenson & Babington.

vi) Miscellaneous:

E.36 120 fo.59 Langham: articles against John Vigorouse, 1534

BRITISH LIBRARY

Harleian MS. 421	Lollard confessions.
Add. MS. 40,730	Rede-roll of Stebbing.
Stowe MS. 827	Church inventories, hundreds of Uttlesford & Freshwell, & half hundred of Clavering, 1552.

2] PRINTED PRIMARY SOURCES

Acts of the Privy Council. ed. J.R. Dasent (32 vols., London, 1890-1907).

Benton, G.M. 'Religious Gilds of Essex', T.E.A.S., N.S. 15 (1918-20), p.98.

Calendar of Assize Records: Essex Indictments Elizabeth I. ed. J. Cockburn (London, 1978).

Calendar of the Patent Rolls. Henry VII (2 vols., London, 1914-16), Edward VI (6 vols., London, 1924-29), Philip & Mary (4 vols., London, 1937-9), Elizabeth I (9 vols., London, 1939-).

Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, 1547-1580. (London, 1856).

Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Addenda, 1547-65, 1566-79 (2 vols., London, 1870-71).

Curling, T.H. 'The Gild of All Saints, Moreton', T.E.A.S. N.S. 11 (1911), pp.223-29.

Dickin, E.P. 'Embezzled Church Goods of Essex', T.E.A.S., N.S. 13 (1913-14), pp.157-71.

Ellis, H. (ed.) Norden's Description of Essex (C.S., London, 1840).

English Historical Documents, vol.V (1485-1558), ed. C.H. Williams (London, 1967).

Fowler, R.C. 'The Religious Gilds of Essex', T.E.A.S., N.S. 12 (1911-12), pp.280-90, N.S. 16 (1921-23), pp.59 & 307.

Foxe, J. Acts and Monuments, ed. A. Clarke (London, n.d.).

King, H.W. 'Inventories of Church Goods, 6th Edw.VI', T.E.A.S. O.S. 4 (1869), pp.197-234, O.S. 5 (1873), pp.116-35, 219-42 & 273-80, N.S. 1 (1878), pp.5-32, N.S. 2 (1884), pp.163-88 & 223-50, N.S. 3 (1885-89), pp.36-63.

Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, eds. J.S. Brewer, J. Gairdner & R.H. Brodie (21 vols. & Addenda, London, 1862-1932).

Loades, D.M. 'The Essex Inquisition of 1556', B.I.H.R. 35 (1962), pp.87-97.

Pressey, W.J., ed. The First Book of the Churchwardens' Accounts of Heybridge, Essex (cir.1509-32) (n.d.).

Pressey, W.J. 'State of the Church in Essex in

1563', Essex Review 46 (1937), pp.144-57.

Statutes at Large. vols.4-6, ed. D Pickering (London, 1763).

Tanner, N.P., ed. Heresy Trials in the Diocese of Norwich, 1428-31 (C.S., 4th Series, vol.20, London, 1977).

Tudor Royal Proclamations. eds. P.L. Hughes & J.F. Larkin (3 vols., Yale, 1964-9).

Valor Ecclesiasticus. eds. J. Caley & J. Hunter (6 vols., London, 1810-34).

Waller, W.C. 'Inventories of Church Goods. 6 Edward VI', T.E.A.S. N.S. 11 (1909-10), pp.90-97 & 202-10.

3] SECONDARY SOURCES

Alexander, G. 'Bonner and the Marian persecutions', The English Reformation Revised, ed. C. Haigh (Cambridge, 1987), pp.157-75.

Alsop, J.D. 'Religious Preambles in Early Modern English Wills as Formulae', J.E.H. 40 (1989), pp.19-27.

Aston, M 'Lollardy and the Reformation: Survival or Revival?', History 49 (1964), pp.149-170.

Barron, C.M. 'The Parish Fraternities of Medieval London', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of F.R.H. Du Boulay. eds. C.M. Barron & C. Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 1985), pp.13-37.

Barron, C.M., & Harper-Bill, C. The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of F.R.H. Du Boulay (Woodbridge, 1985).

Barry, J. 'Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century Bristol', Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England. ed. B. Reay (London, 1985), pp.59-90.

Bennett, J.M. 'Conviviality and Charity in Medieval and Early Modern England', P.& P. 134 (1992), pp.19-41.

Bittle, W.G. & Lane, R. 'Inflation and Philanthropy in England: A Re-Assessment of W.K. Jordan's Data', The Economic History Review 29 (1976), pp.203-10.

Bossy, J. 'The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism', P.& P. 21 (1962), pp.39-60.

Bossy, J. 'Blood and Baptism: Kinship, Community and Christianity in Western Europe from the Fourteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries', Sanctity and Secularity: The Church and the World. ed. D. Baker

(Studies in Church History, 10, 1973), pp.129-43.

Bossy, J. 'Holiness and Society', P.& P. 75 (1977), pp.119-37.

Bossy, J. 'The Mass as a Social Institution, 1200-1700', P.& P. 100 (1983), pp.29-61.

Bowker, M. The Henrician Reformation: the Diocese of Lincoln under John Longland, 1521-1547 (Cambridge, 1981).

Bowker, M. 'The Henrician Reformation and the Parish Clergy', The English Reformation Revised, ed. C. Haigh (Cambridge, 1987), pp.75-93.

Bowler, G. 'Marian Protestants and the Idea of Violent Resistance to Tyranny', Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England, eds. P. Lake & M. Dowling (London, 1987), pp.124-43.

Brigden, S. 'Popular Disturbance and the Fall of Thomas Cromwell and the Reformers, 1539-1540', H.J. 24 (1981), pp.257-78.

Brigden, S. 'Youth and the English Reformation', P.& P. 95 (1982), pp.37-67.

Brigden, S. 'Religion and Social Obligation in Early Sixteenth-Century London', P.&

P. 103 (1984), pp.67-112.

Brigden, S. London and the Reformation (Oxford, 1989).

Brooke, C.F.T. The Tudor Drama: A History of English National Drama to the Retirement of Shakespeare (Cambridge, 1911).

Brown, H.M. 'Musicians in the Mysteres and Miracles', Medieval English Drama, eds. J. Taylor & A. Nelson (Chicago, 1972), pp.81-97.

Burgess, C. ''For the Increase of Divine Service': Chantries in the Parish in Late Medieval Bristol', J.E.H. 36 (1985), pp.46-65.

Burgess, C. ''By Quick and by Dead': Wills and Pious Provision in Late Medieval Bristol', E.H.R. 102 (1987), pp.837-58.

Burgess, C. ''A Fond Thing Vainly Invented': An Essay on Purgatory and Pious Motives in Later Medieval England', Parish, Church and People, ed. S. Wright (London, 1988), pp.56-84.

Burke, P. Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe (London, 1978).

Burke, P. 'Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century London', Popular Culture in

Seventeenth-Century England. ed. B. Reay (London, 1985), pp.31-58.

Carpenter, N. C. 'Music in the Secunda Pastorum'. Medieval English Drama. eds. J. Taylor & A. Nelson (Chicago, 1972), pp.212-7.

Clark, P.A. English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent 1500-1640 (Hassocks, 1977).

Clay, B. 'Papist Priest Protests at Harwich, 1535', Essex Recusant 3 (1961), pp.51-8.

Collinson, P. Archbishop Grindal, 1519-1583: The Struggle for a Reformed Church (London, 1979).

Collinson, P. The Religion of Protestants: the Church in English Society 1559-1625 (Oxford, 1982).

Collinson, P. 'The Elizabethan Church and the New Religion', The Reign of Elizabeth I. ed. C. Haigh (Basingstoke, 1984), pp.169-94.

Collinson, P. The Birthpangs of Protestant England (Basingstoke, 1988).

Cook, G.H. The English Mediaeval Parish Church (London, 1954).

Cross, C. Church and People 1450-1660 (London,

1976).

Cross, C. — Urban Magistrates and Ministers: Religion in Hull and Leeds from the Reformation to the Civil War (Borthwick Papers no.67, 1985).

Davidson, T. — 'Plough Rituals in England and Scotland', Agricultural History Review 7 (1959), pp.27-37.

Davies, C. — ''Poor Persecuted Little Flock' or 'Commonwealth of Christians': Edwardian Protestant Concepts of the Church', Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England, eds. P. Lake & M. Dowling (London, 1987), pp.78-102.

Davies, C.S.L. — Peace, Print and Protestantism 1450-1558 (London, 1976).

Davis, J.F. — Heresy and the Reformation in the South-East of England, 1520-1559 (London, 1983).

Dickens, A.G. — Lollards and Protestants in the Diocese of York, 1509-1558 (Oxford, 1959).

Dickens, A.G. — The English Reformation (London, 1964).

Dickens, A.G. — 'The Early Expansion of Protestantism in England 1520-1558', Archiv fur

Reformationsgeschichte 78 (1987), pp.187-222.

Dowling, M. 'The Gospel and the Court: Reformation under Henry VIII', Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England, eds. P. Lake & M. Dowling (London, 1987), pp.36-77.

Dunn, E.C. 'Popular Devotion in the Vernacular Drama of Medieval England', Medievalia et Humanistica 4 (1973), pp.55-68.

Dures, A. English Catholicism 1558-1642: Continuity and Change (Harlow, 1983).

Elton, G.R. Policy and Police: The Enforcement of the Reformation in the Age of Thomas Cromwell (Cambridge, 1972).

Elton, G.R. Reform and Reformation: England 1509-1558 (London, 1977).

Emmison, F.G. Elizabethan Life: Disorder (Chelmsford, 1970).

Emmison, F.G. Elizabethan Life: Morals and the Church Courts (Chelmsford, 1973).

Facey, J. 'John Foxe and the Defence of the English Church', Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England, eds. P. Lake & M. Dowling (London, 1987), pp.162-92.

Fines, J. 'Heresy Trials in the Diocese of

Coventry and Lichfield, 1511-12', J.E.H. 14 (1963), pp.160-74.

Fletcher, A. — Tudor Rebellions (3rd edn., Harlow, 1983).

Garrett, C. — The Marian Exiles: A Study in the Origins of Elizabethan Puritanism (Cambridge, 1938).

Green, A.J. — The Essex Martyrs (London, 1853).

Green, A. — 'Legacy of History: Essex Wills before and after the Refomation'. Essex Review Jan. 1957, pp.63-73.

Grieve, H.E.P. — 'The Deprived Married Clergy in Essex, 1553-1561', T.R.H.S. 4th Series, 22 (1940), pp.141-69.

Guy, J. — Tudor England (Oxford, 1988).

Habakkuk, H.J. — 'The Market for Monastic Property, 1539-1603', The Economic History Review 10 (1958), pp.362-80.

Haigh, C. — Reformation and Resistance in Tudor Lancashire (Cambridge, 1975).

Haigh, C. — 'From Monopoly to Minority: Catholicism in Early Modern England', T.R.H.S. 5th Series, 31 (1981), pp.129-47.

Haigh, C. (ed.) — The Reign of Elizabeth I (Basingstoke, 1984).

Haigh, C. — 'The Church of England, the Catholics

and the People', The Reign of Elizabeth I, ed. C. Haigh (Basingstoke, 1984), pp.195-219.

Haigh, C. 'Revisionism, the Reformation and the History of English Catholicism', J.E.H. 36 (1985), pp.394-406.

Haigh, C. (ed.) The English Reformation Revised (Cambridge, 1987).

Haigh, C. 'The recent historiography of the English Reformation', The English Reformation Revised, ed. C. Haigh (Cambridge, 1987), pp.19-33.

Haigh, C. 'Anticlericalism and the English Reformation', The English Reformation Revised, ed C. Haigh (Cambridge, 1987), pp.56-74.

Haigh, C. 'The Continuity of Catholicism in the English Reformation', The English Reformation Revised, ed. C. Haigh (Cambridge, 1987), pp.176-208.

Haigh, C. 'The English Reformation: a Premature Birth, a Difficult Labour and a Sickly Child', H.J. 33 (1990), pp.449-59.

Hanawalt, B.A. 'Keepers of the Lights: Late Medieval English Parish Guilds', Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies 14 (1984), pp.21-37.

Harper-Bill, C. 'Dean Colet's Convocation Sermon and the Pre-Reformation Church in England', History 73 (1988), pp.191-210.

Harper-Bill, C. The Pre-Reformation Church in England 1400-1530 (Harlow, 1989).

Heal, F. & O'Day, R. (eds.) Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I (London, 1977).

Heal, F. 'Economic Problems of the Clergy', Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I, eds. F. Heal & R. O'Day (London, 1977), pp.99-118.

Heath, P. 'Urban Piety in the Later Middle Ages: the Evidence of Hull Wills', The Church, Politics & Patronage in the Fifteenth Century. ed. B. Dobson (Gloucester, 1984), pp.209-34.

Hicks, M. 'Chantries, Obits and Almshouses: The Hungerford Foundations 1325-1478', The Church in Pre-Reformation Society: Essays in Honour of F.R.H. Du Boulay, eds. C.M. Barron & C. Harper-Bill (Woodbridge, 1985), pp.123-42.

Holt, R. & Rosser, G. (eds.) The Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1200-1540 (London, 1990).

Hope, A. 'Lollardy: the Stone the Builders

Rejected?', Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England. eds. P. Lake & M. Dowling (London, 1987), pp.1-35.

Hudson, A. 'The Examination of Lollards', B.I.H.R. 46 (1973), pp.145-59.

Hudson, A. The Premature Reformation: Wycliffite Texts and Lollard History (Oxford, 1988).

Hunt, W. The Puritan Moment: The Coming of Revolution in an English County (Harvard, 1983).

Hutton, R. 'The Local Impact of the Tudor Reformations', The English Reformation Revised. ed. C. Haigh (Cambridge, 1987), pp.114-38.

James, M. 'Ritual, Drama and the Social Body in the Late Medieval English Town', P.& P. 98 (1983), pp.3-29.

Johnston, A.F. 'The Guild of Corpus Christi and the Procession of Corpus Christi in York', Medieval Studies 38 (1976), pp.372-84.

Jones, N.L. 'Elizabeth's First Year: The Conception and Birth of the Elizabethan Political World', The Reign of Elizabeth I. ed.C. Haigh (Basingstoke, 1984).

Jordan, W.K. — Philanthropy in England 1480-1660 (London, 1959).

Kitching, C.J. — 'The Quest for Concealed Lands in the Reign of Elizabeth I', T.R.H.S., 5th Series, 24 (1974), pp.63-78.

Kitching, C. — 'The Disposal of Monastic and Chantry Lands', Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I, eds. F. Heal & R. O'Day (London, 1977), pp.119-36.

Knowles, M.D. & Hadcock, R.N. — Medieval Religious Houses, England and Wales (2nd edn., Harlow, 1971).

Kolve, V.A. — The Play Called Corpus Christi (Stanford, 1966).

Kreider, A. — English Chantries: the Road to Dissolution (Harvard, 1979).

Lake, P. & Dowling, M. (eds.) — Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England (London, 1987).

Lander, J.R. — Government and Community: England 1450-1509 (London, 1980).

Lander, S. — 'Church Courts and the Reformation in the Diocese of Chichester, 1500-58', The English Reformation Revised, ed. C. Haigh (Cambridge, 1987), pp.34-55.

Laslett, P. — The World We Have Lost. (London, 1965).

Loach, J. & — The Mid-Tudor Polity, c.1540-1560

Tittler, R. (Basingstoke, 1980).

Loades, D.M. 'The Enforcement of Reaction, 1553-1558', J.E.H. 16 (1965), pp.54-66.

Loades, D.M. The Oxford Martyrs (London, 1970).

Loades, D.M. The Reign of Mary Tudor: Politics, Government, and Religion in England, 1553-1558 (London, 1979).

Luxton, I. 'The Reformation and Popular Culture', Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I, eds. F. Heal & R. O'Day (London, 1977), pp.57-77.

MacCulloch, D. The Later Reformation in England 1547-1603 (Basingstoke, 1990).

Mason, E. 'The Role of the English Parishioner, 1100-1500', J.E.H. 27 (1976), pp.17-29.

Mayhew, G.J. 'The Progress of the Reformation in East Sussex 1530-1559: The Evidence from Wills', Southern History 5 (1983), pp.38-67.

Mepham, W.A. 'A General Survey of Mediaeval Drama in Essex: the Fifteenth Century', Essex Review 54 (1945), pp.52-8.

Mepham, W.A. 'A General Survey of Mediaeval Drama in Essex: the Sixteenth Century', Essex Review 54 (1945), pp.107-12, 139-42.

Mepham, W.A. 'Mediaeval Plays in the 16th Century at Heybridge and Braintree', Essex Review 55 (1946), pp.8-18.

Mepham, W.A. 'Mediaeval Drama in Essex: Dunmow', Essex Review 55 (1946), pp.57-65, 129-36.

Mepham, W.A. 'Municipal Drama at Maldon in the Sixteenth Century', Essex Review 55 (1946), pp.169-75, & Essex Review 56 (1947), pp.34-41.

Mepham, W.A. 'The Chelmsford Plays of the Sixteenth Century', Essex Review 56 (1947), pp.148-52, 171-8.

Monter, W. Ritual, Myth and Magic in Early Modern Europe (Brighton, 1983).

Morant, P. The History and Antiquities of the most ancient Town and Borough of Colchester in the County of Essex (London, 1748).

Morant, P. The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex (2 vols., London, 1763-8).

Nelson, A.H. 'Some Configurations of Staging in Medieval English Drama', Medieval English Drama, eds. J. Taylor & A. Nelson (Chicago, 1972), pp.116-47.

O'Day, R. 'Ecclesiastical Patronage: Who

Controlled the Church?', Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I. eds. F. Heal & R. O'Day (London, 1977), pp.137-55.

O'Day, R. The Debate on the English Reformation (London, 1986).

O'Leary, J.G. 'Essex and Parliament During the Reformation', Essex Recusant 1 (1959), pp.4-14.

O'Leary, J.G. 'Thirty Years After: Some Essex Churches in 1565', Essex Recusant 4 (1962), pp.88-90.

Oxley, J.E. The Reformation in Essex to the Death of Mary (Manchester, 1965).

Palliser, D.M. 'Popular Reactions to the Reformation during the Years of Uncertainty, 1530-70', Church and Society in England: Henry VIII to James I. eds. F. Heal & R. O'Day (London, 1977), pp.35-56.

Palliser, D.M. 'Introduction: The Parish in Perspective', Parish, Church and People. ed. S. Wright (London, 1988), pp.5-28.

Palmer, M.D. Henry VIII (2nd edn., Harlow, 1983)

Pevsner, N. The Buildings of England: Essex (London, 1954).

Phythian-Adams, C. Local History and Folklore: A New

Framework (London, 1975).

Phythian-Adams, C. 'Ceremony and the Citizen: The Communal Year at Coventry 1450-1550', The Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1200-1540, eds. R. Holt & G. Rosser (London, 1990), pp.238-64.

Plumb, D. 'The Social and Economic Spread of Rural Lollardy: A Reappraisal', Voluntary Religion, eds. W.J. Sheils & D. Wood (Studies in Church History, 23, 1986), pp.111-29.

Pogson, R.H. 'The Legacy of the Schism: Confusion, Continuity and Change in the Marian Clergy', The Mid-Tudor Polity, c.1540-1560, eds. J. Loach & R. Tittler (Basingstoke, 1980), pp.116-36.

Pogson, R.H. 'Revival and Reform in Mary Tudor's Church: A Question of Money', The English Reformation Revised, ed. C. Haigh (Cambridge, 1987), pp.139-56.

Reay, B. (ed.) Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England (London, 1985).

Reay, B. 'Popular Religion', Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England, ed. B. Reay (London, 1985), pp.91-128.

Rosser, G. 'Communities of Parish and Guild in the Late Middle Ages', Parish, Church

and People, ed. S. Wright (London, 1988), pp.29-55.

Rosser, G. Medieval Westminster 1200-1540 (Oxford, 1989).

Rosser, G. 'The Essence of Medieval Urban Communities: The Vill of Westminster 1200-1540', The Medieval Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1200-1540, eds. R. Holt & G. Rosser (London, 1990), pp.216-37.

Rubin, M. 'Corpus Christi Fraternities and Late Medieval Piety', Voluntary Religion, eds. W.J. Sheils & D. Wood (Studies in Church History, 23, 1986), pp.97-109.

Rubin, M. 'Corpus Christi: Inventing a Feast', History Today 40 (1990), pp.15-21.

Rubin, M. Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture (Cambridge, 1991).

Russell, C. The Crisis of Parliaments: English History 1509-1660 (Oxford, 1971).

Scarisbrick, J.J. Henry VIII (London, 1968).

Scarisbrick, J.J. The Reformation and the English People (Oxford, 1984).

Schmitt, N.C. 'Was There a Medieval Theatre in the Round? A Re-examination of the Evidence', Medieval English Drama, eds. J. Taylor & A. Nelson (Chicago,

1972), pp.292-315.

Shakespeare, J. 'Plague and Punishment', Protestantism and the National Church in Sixteenth-Century England, eds. P. Lake & M. Dowling (London, 1987), pp.103-23.

Sharpe, J.A. Early Modern England: A Social History 1550-1760 (London, 1987).

Sheils, W.J. The English Reformation 1530-1570 (Harlow, 1989).

Sheils, W.J. 'Protestantism in the English Reformation', J.E.H. 41 (1990), pp.64-8.

Spufford, M. 'The Scribes of Villagers' Wills in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries and their Influence', Local Population Studies 7 (1971), pp.28-43.

Strype, J. Ecclesiastical Memorials, Relating Chiefly to Religion, and the Reformation of It, and the Emergencies of the Church of England, under King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, and Queen Mary (3 vols., Oxford, 1822).

Swanson, R.N. Church and Society in Late Medieval England (Oxford, 1989).

Taylor, J. 'Critics, Mutations and Historians of Medieval English Drama: An Introduction to the Essays that

Follow', Medieval English Drama, eds. J. Taylor & A. Nelson (Chicago, 1972), pp.1-27.

Taylor, J. 'The Dramatic Structure of the Middle English Corpus Christi, or Cycle, Plays', Medieval English Drama, eds. J. Taylor & A. Nelson (Chicago, 1972), pp.148-56.

Taylor, J. & Nelson, A.H. Medieval English Drama: Essays Critical and Contextual (Chicago, 1972).

Thomas, K.V. Religion and the Decline of Magic (London, 1971).

Thomson, J.A.F. 'Piety and Charity in Late Medieval London', J.E.H. 16 (1965), pp.178-95.

Tittler, R. The Reign of Mary I (Harlow, 1983).

Tittler, R. & Battley, S.L. 'The Local Community and the Crown in 1553: the Accession of Mary Tudor Revisited', B.I.H.R. 57 (1984), pp.131-9.

Tudor, P. 'Religious Instruction for Children and Adolescents in the Early English Reformation', J.E.H. 35 (1984), pp.391-413.

Victoria County History of Essex, The. (London, 1909-).

Walker, G. 'The Strange Death of Protestant England?', History of European Ideas

13 (1991), pp.269-76.

Wickham, G. — The Medieval Theatre (3rd edn., Cambridge, 1987).

White, E. — The St Christopher and St George Guild of York (Borthwick Papers no.72, 1987).

Whiting, R. — 'Abominable Idols: Images and Image-Breaking under Henry VIII', J.E.H. 33 (1982), pp.30-47.

Whiting, R. — ''For the Health of My Soul': Prayers for the Dead in the Tudor South-West', Southern History 5 (1983), pp.68-94.

Whiting, R. — The Blind Devotion of the People: Popular religion and the English Reformation (Cambridge, 1989).

Wright, R. — 'The Medieval Theatre in Some Essex Towns: Dunmow, Chelmsford, Maldon, Heybridge and Braintree', Essex Journal 9 (1974/5), pp.110-21.

Wright, S. (ed.) — Parish, Church and People (London, 1988).

Wright, S. — 'Catechism, Confirmation and Communion: The Role of the Young in the Post-Reformation Church', Parish, Church and People, ed. S. Wright (London, 1988), pp.203-27.

Wrightson, K. & — Poverty and Piety in an English

Levine, D. — Villages: Terling, 1525-1700 (London, 1979).

Zell, M.L. — 'The Personnel of the Clergy in Kent, in the Reformation Period', E.H.R. 89 (1974), pp.513-33.

Zell, M.L. — 'The Use of Religious Preambles as a Measure of Religious Belief in the Sixteenth Century', B.I.H.R. 50 (1977), pp.246-9.

4] UNPUBLISHED DISSERTATIONS

Anglin, J.P. — 'The Court of the Archdeacon of Essex, 1571-1609: an Institutional and Social Study' (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 1965).

Byford, M.S. — 'The Price of Protestantism: Assessing the Impact of Religious Change on Elizabethan Essex: the Cases of Heydon and Colchester, 1558-1594' (D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1988).

Coldeway, J.C. — 'Early Essex Drama: a History of its Rise and Fall and a Theory Concerning the Digby Plays' (Ph.D., University of Colorado, 1972).

Higgs, L.M. — 'Lay Piety in the Borough of

Levine, D. Village: Terling, 1525-1700 (London, 1979).

Zell, M.L. 'The Personnel of the Clergy in Kent, in the Reformation Period', E.H.R. 89 (1974), pp.513-33.

Zell, M.L. 'The Use of Religious Preambles as a Measure of Religious Belief in the Sixteenth Century', B.I.H.R. 50 (1977), pp.246-9.

4] UNPUBLISHED DISSERTATIONS

Anglin, J.P. 'The Court of the Archdeacon of Essex, 1571-1609: an Institutional and Social Study' (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles, 1965).

Byford, M.S. 'The Price of Protestantism: Assessing the Impact of Religious Change on Elizabethan Essex: the Cases of Heydon and Colchester, 1558-1594' (D.Phil., University of Oxford, 1988).

Coldewey, J.C. 'Early Essex Drama: a History of its Rise and Fall and a Theory Concerning the Digby Plays' (Ph.D., University of Colorado, 1972).

Higgs, L.M. 'Lay Piety in the Borough of

Colchester, 1485-1558' (Ph.D., University of Michigan, 1983).

This thesis is prepared in accordance with the guidelines on the presentation of research theses produced by the University of Warwick.